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Mayor defends record

Miller talks budget, battles as he marks 5 years on the job

David Miller bristled at the suggestion there may be a perception out there that he can't get the deal done as Toronto mayor.

"Nobody's ever suggested that to me, ever," Miller said in an interview Friday in his city hall office marking five years in the job.

The mayor, now at the halfway point of his second mandate, rhymed off a list of actions that the city has taken under his leadership, from climate change projects like green roofs to tax incentives for businesses to set up shop in certain neighbourhoods.

Construction is underway on the waterfront, including the new Corus building and George Brown College, he said.

Miller pointed to the balanced operating budget — $8.2 billion, with a 3.75 per cent residential property tax hike — that was presented in January, the first in a decade in which the city managed to balance its books without waiting for help from the province.

> **"I have to build a coalition on every single vote."**
> Mayor David Miller

But while Miller has taken the politically difficult step of raising revenues through a municipal land transfer tax and vehicle registration fee, the battle was messy, involving a deferral vote by rebellious councillors, followed by threats to close community centres on Mondays and shut down the Sheppard subway indefinitely. The taxes were approved, but watered down.

"I have to build a coalition on every single vote," Miller said. "Do some of the proposals get changed? Yes, of course."

But Miller argued that's part of legitimate municipal government, where councillors have to come together to forge agreement. **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**

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Parade **Touch of the holiday spirit**

PAWEL DWULIT/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Toronto Auxilliary Police Const. Jennifer Conant gets her nose poked by six-year-old Isabella Facchinelli at the Toronto Santa Claus Parade in Toronto yesterday. **Story, page 3.**

Pressure on MPs to make this Parliament work

RETURN MPs return to Parliament tomorrow for a session that promises to test partisan instincts and political philosophies.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper vowed during the election campaign not to run a deficit but now faces pressure for deficit spending to help the economy; while the Liberals are trying to shake off a post-election funk under a caretaker leader until a new party boss is chosen next May.

And with Canadians worried about their jobs and government revenues battered, all 308 MPs are feeling pressure to curb the partisan antics that poisoned the last session.

"I think our entire government is willing to try and do whatever we can to make this next Parliament as productive and positive and collegial as possible," Government House Leader Jay Hill said. **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**

Metro World News Guest Editor Exclusive

JamesBlunt

Pop singer adds own flair to Metro

British pop star James Blunt is going behind the scenes at Metro today as our first-ever global guest editor. On the eve of his cross-Canada tour, the multimillion-selling singer-songwriter, best known for his hit single You're Beautiful, is providing input in our newsrooms, contributing to our Comment & Views page (pg 13), and focusing attention on Medecins Sans Frontieres, an international medical humanitarian organization (see story at metronews.ca). Blunt also has something to say about online music sites in our Entertainment section (pg 24). "With so much going on in the world right now," Blunt says, "I am looking forward to editing a newspaper, raising the profile of subjects close to my heart and hopefully have a little fun along the way." Visit metronews.ca to learn about Blunt's passion for skiing and his picks on where to hit the slopes, and find out more about what happens when Blunt trades in his guitar for a notepad.

Workology pg 22

Ontarians go from layoffs to learning

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Bronfmans offer reward for return of jewels
The Bronfman family will offer a private "substantial financial reward" for the return of 59 items of jewellery worth more than $1 million stolen in a break-and-enter more than a week ago. The family will also set up a website and tip line. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Local

TTC picks architects for new stations

In anticipation of the extension of the Spadina subway north from Downsview, the TTC has hired globetrotting architects to design six new stations. Among them are two leading U.K. practitioners, Will Alsop and Norman Foster, both of whom have worked in Toronto. Alsop is the author of the celebrated "flying tabletop" at the Ontario College of Art and Design. Foster's only local project is the University of Toronto's Leslie Dan Pharmacy Building. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Tomorrow's Metro

Music
Serena Ryder talks to Metro about her new album Is It OK ahead of a concert at the Mod Club Theatre Wednesday.

metronews.ca
What's online today.

Watch James Blunt on why he's excited to be Metro's guest editor at metronews.ca.
Read Guidy Mamann's column on immigration matters at metronews.ca.

Lotteries

Friday, Nov. 14: Lotto Super 7 6, 10, 18, 28, 33, 35 & 43. Bonus 17
Saturday, Nov. 15: Lotto 6/49 8, 9, 12, 16, 19 & 21. Bonus 47
Sunday, Nov. 16: Ontario Pick 3 7 1 2; Ontario Pick 4 4 3 8 5; Encore 9771382; Daily Keno 5, 7, 14, 15, 16, 22, 24, 28, 29, 31, 33, 39, 46, 52, 55, 56, 57, 60, 61, 69
These results are not official.

Miller shuffles committees

Thompson, Mihevc say they wanted to keep posts

Two councillors, including a member of the mayor's executive, are steamed after losing key positions in David Miller's slight shuffle of city hall committees.

Though he asked to remain one of nine councillors on the Toronto Transit Commission, Michael Thompson was turfed yesterday.

And Coun. Joe Mihevc, who typically votes with the mayor, was bumped as chair of the community development and recreation committee, the group responsible for issues such as homelessness, daycare, social services and recreational programs.

Thompson blamed his circumstances on the fact he was part of an active push at city hall to get the TTC declared an essential service, a move Miller opposed.

And Mihevc, chair of community development since early 2004, said he "absolutely" wanted to stay on in his role and views Miller's move as a "firing." Mihevc remains a member of the committee, but is being replaced as chair by Coun. Janet Davis, currently the vice-chair.

Meanwhile, councillors Mark Grimes and Paul Ainslie were appointed to the Toronto Zoo board of management, replacing councillors Mike Del Grande and Thompson, who resigned recently after the board fired the zoo's foundation. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Brampton man killed in hit-and-run

Mandeep Bhagtana's family is willing to put aside its anger after his weekend hit-and-run death in Brampton.

They just want to know how he spent his last living moments.

Bhagtana, 40, was killed early Saturday when he was struck by a vehicle that fled the accident scene on Bovaird Drive, west of Kennedy Road. Peel police are still hunting the hit-and-run driver.

It was dark and raining when Bhagtana was run down near a shopping plaza at Conestoga Drive. The driver's side mirror was ripped from the vehicle in the collision and police say that and other items, including paint chips, will eventually lead them to the driver.

PAWEL DWULIT/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE
Debris is seen marked by Peel Region Police after a hit and run on Bovaird Road in Brampton.

Bhagtana brought his wife and two children to Canada from the Punjab area of India in 2000 to be near relatives and friends. Many of those people crowded the family's home to grieve with his widow, their daughter, 14, and son, 10. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Santa parade adds warmth on chilly day

As he has every year since 1905, Santa Claus descended on Toronto streets yesterday, bringing an army of clowns and familiar characters along with him.

He was greeted with cheers and screams from children, parents and grandparents alike, many of whom gathered hours before he touched down in town.

Among those who gathered early was Livio Vendramin, 40, his wife, and two daughters, Michela and Sofia, who watched from the corner of Bloor Street and Spadina Avenue.

"It's a family tradition. One of those days you don't miss, kind of like Christmas," said Vendramin, who has been to the parade every year since the early 1970s.

Added Michela, 8: "It's nice to see Santa, but there's lots more stuff to see, too. They throw stuff out, too, you know," she said of the free candy tossed into the crowd.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Origin

- Originally founded by the Eaton's department store 104 years ago as a marketing ploy, the parade has, for many, grown into a family tradition.

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Man, 65, killed in collision

A 65-year-old man is dead following a vehicle collision yesterday afternoon that left a passenger in his car and the driver of the other vehicle with non-life threatening injuries. The deceased's car was struck by an SUV in Elgin County, southwest of Toronto. The deceased was a resident of Guelph. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Police see rash of iPod thefts

9 victims since late October

Another person was robbed of their iPod in Toronto this weekend, becoming the latest victim in what appears to be a rash of similar thefts for the popular portable music player.

Police say at least eight other people, mostly youth, have been mugged of their iPods throughout the city since late October.

And the latest incident occurs as an Ottawa murder trial unfolds for a young man accused of knifing another to death over the popular gadget.

"We tend to find that cellphones, iPods — digital accessories — are a popular object to obtain nowadays from street robberies, along with monies," said Toronto police Det. Chris Chilvers, who's investigating the latest mugging as part of a larger series of robberies overnight.

Nine youth face 81 charges following at least five robberies, which also nabbed two cellphones and wallets not far from downtown Toronto. The age of the latest victim who had his iPod stolen is not yet known.

During the apparently random attacks, Chilvers said men from 18 to 48 years old were pummelled with a steel object alleged to be a meat tenderizer, causing serious injuries to the head and face.

The arrests were made as part of a wider police initiative against street robbery that sees officers targeting areas for 24 hours, he said.

"We've seen a bit of a rise in street robberies since school has begun," he said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Youth victims

- Youth tend to be more frequently victimized in the case of digital device robberies, agreed Const. Wayne Patterson, a spokesperson for Peel region police.

RENE JOHNSTON/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Dayo Mlendough speaks at city council chambers on Friday. Mlendough was part of a pilot project in the Jane-Finch area, which saw her children get signed up for swimming and soccer.

City to expand poverty program

CONNECT Dayo Mlendough can't find the words to express how her life has changed.

She struggled with her emotions as she told politicians this week how a pilot project in the Jane-Finch neighbourhood changed her and her children's lives.

"Imagine in a situation, where you don't know where to turn, and someone comes knocking on your door, and says, 'We're here to help you,'" said Mlendough, who has nine-year-old twins and two teens aged 15 and 17.

Last year when she applied for welfare benefits, a case worker told her she was a good candidate for Investing in Families, which helps single parents on social assistance connect with city programs and youth employment initiatives.

In Mlendough's case, her boys were signed up for soccer and swimming lessons as well as summer camp. Mlendough was unaware her children qualified for free programming.

"I felt like a rich woman," said Mlendough, whose daughter was also enrolled in youth leadership training and a young writers class.

The city is now planning on slowly rolling the program, which helps has helped about 400 families, out to 12 other priority neighbourhoods.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Area mosque's website draws complaints

ETOBICOKE A mosque's website has provoked concern in moderate Muslim and Jewish communities.

The liberal Muslim Canadian Congress called on the federal government to revoke the charitable status of the Somali Islamic Society of Canada, which owns the Khalid Bin Al-Walid mosque.

Underneath a disclaimer denying responsibility for those not employed by the mosque, Q & As host opinions by Islamic scholars Farzana Hassan, MCC president, said are "in contravention to what a moderate Muslim should stand for."

Hassan, when asked what in particular was offensive, responded: "Their statements about women. For example, they say female circumcision is honourable." TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

News in brief

FIRE A 72-year-old man is in critical condition after a blaze broke out at a home Saturday on Vaughan Road. Officials said he was treated life-threatening burns and smoke inhalation. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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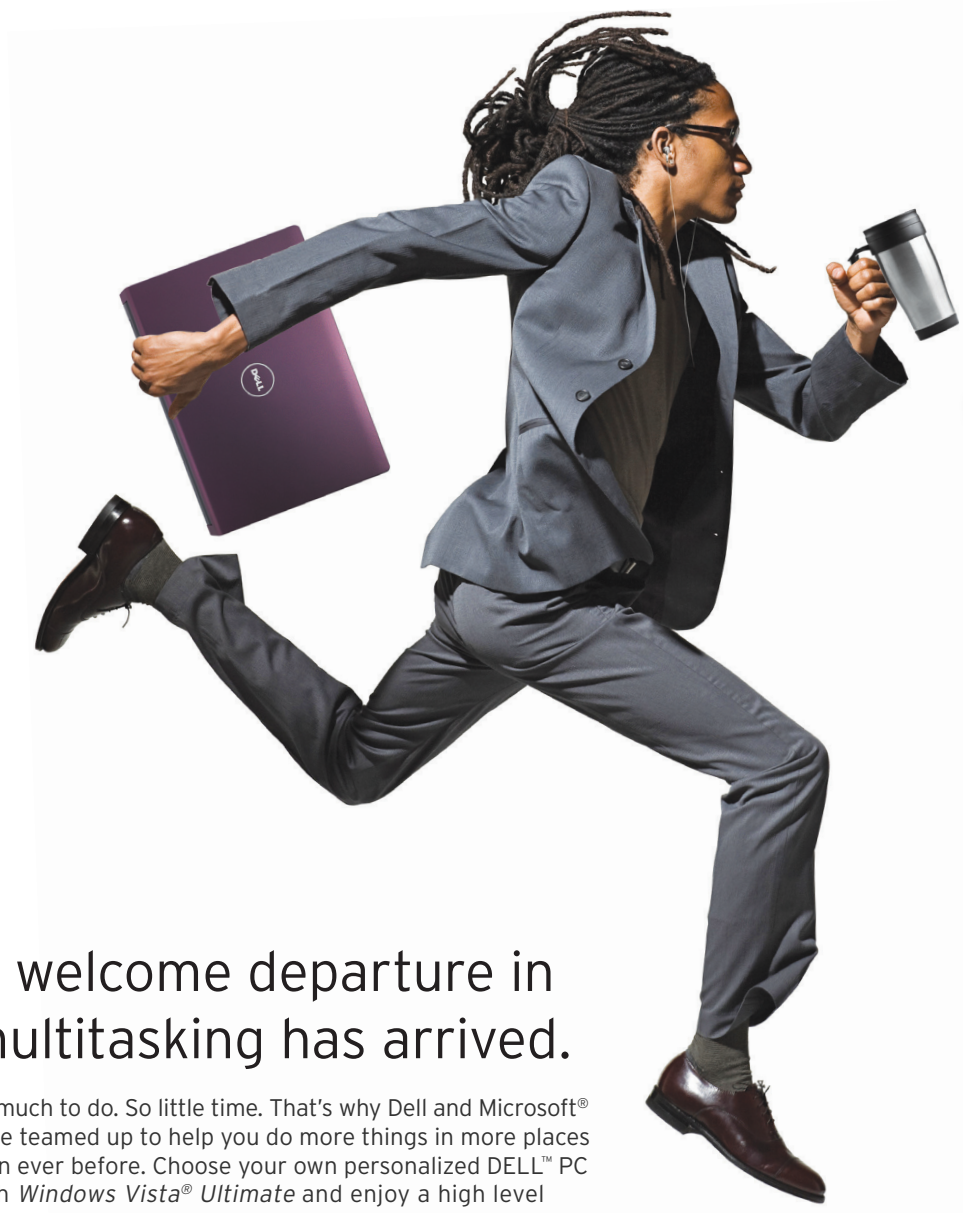

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Man slashed with razor blade
A fight over a woman in a night club led to a man being cut in the face with a razor blade in Oakville early yesterday morning. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Catholic school to close its doors

A Mississauga elementary school will be the first to hit the chopping block, after trustees from the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board approved its closure this week.

Blessed Trinity School on Credit Valley Road will close after the school year ends in June 2009, and students at the school will be redirected to the nearby St. Rose of Lima next September — a school that was also slated to close.

Changing demographics in the area of Central Erin Mills, including an increasing number of baby boomers, fewer children of school age, and decreasing number of Catholics moving into the area has led to significantly reduced enrolment in Catholic schools. "The population and demographics are changing," said Bruce Campbell, the spokesman for the school board.

"You have to be Catholic to go to a Catholic elementary school, and so we have found our enrolment dwindling," he said.

The final decision to close the school came after a yearlong review and multiple consultation process with community members, but the news was still a blow to parents.

"The process was a long, extensive, comprehensive one and the possibility of (closure) existed all along," said Campbell. "But once it actually happens, it's still pretty shocking," he said.

"Nobody is overjoyed that a school is being closed."

The closure is expected to save the board an esti mated $160,400. The outcome of two other area reviews, Bramalea North and Dixie Shorefront, will take place over the next month

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Dwindling numbers

- As of September, only 103 students were enrolled at Blessed Trinity – although its capacity is closer to 300.
- Four other schools in the area were also found to have lower than 50 per cent capacity.

200-year-old landmark saved by sprinklers

FIRE After their historic church escaped serious smoke and fire damage over the weekend, officials weren't worried about being open for Sunday service.

"There's just a little bit of smoke damage," said Assistant Bishop Philip Poole of the Anglican church diocese of Toronto, adding no one was injured.

Just half an hour before an organ recital was to begin, fire broke out in a chapel off the main entrance of the more than 200-year-old cathedral at Church and King streets.

Assistant sexton Ross Hopkins said he saw flames licking the dark walls of the unlit and minimally furnished prayer room St. George's chapel about 7 p.m. Friday.

"I saw the flames and called 9-1-1," Hopkins said, adding that the building's sprinkler system came on right away.

The cause of the fire is still under investigation.

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Conservatives tilt right

Some 2,000 delegates at the first Tory policy convention since March 2005 adopted right-leaning resolutions that would strip human-rights tribunals of some powers and create new charges for the killing of unborn children. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

Canada

Grand Prix canned

While on a campaign stop yesterday in Montreal, Premier Jean Charest said the 2009 Grand Prix is cancelled, citing the steep financial demands by F1 boss Bernie Ecclestone.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Rae, Ignatieff arguing already

Main contenders for Liberal leadership quarrel over first meeting

The gloves are off in the Liberal leadership race, with Bob Rae accusing former college roommate Michael Ignatieff of trying to block media coverage of an all-candidates' forum.

"It seems an awful signal to have a debate that is closed to the media, closed to Canadians," Rae said in a statement issued on the weekend. "This isn't a good note on which to start this race."

He followed up with an appearance early yesterday on CTV's Question Period, where he blamed the Ignatieff camp for trying to keep a lid on the session.

"You can't have a town hall without the town," said Rae, arguing that the Liberals need to open up and renew themselves if they hope to boost public support and return to power in Ottawa.

"The Liberal party is not a private club."

CHRIS YOUNG/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Bob Rae leaves the Liberal leadership town hall meeting yesterday, after objecting to its closed door format.

Rae, Ignatieff and New Brunswick MP Dominic LeBlanc met yesterday in Toronto at a question-and-answer session before members of the executive board of the federal party's Ontario wing.

The Ignatieff camp said it had understood from the start that it was to be a private session, but Rae said that came as news to him.

"Let's be clear: I don't set the rules. Leadership candidates don't set the rules," Ignatieff said shortly after he arrived at the Mississauga hotel where the meeting was taking place.

Leblanc, meanwhile, pounced on the chance to score some early points against the two perceived front-runners.

"Their game hasn't even started, and they're at each other's throats," Leblanc said. "I think Liberals are tired of that sort of 'me too' attitude."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Housing advocates ask province for extra $100 a month for poor

An extra $189 a month would buy a lot of groceries for Pamela Soutar and her two daughters, who are left with just $74 from their welfare cheque after paying rent and utilities for their cramped High Park walk-up.

That's what Soutar, 39, would receive under a new provincial housing benefit proposed by a coalition of non-profit housing advocates, community groups, landlords and two private foundations.

Cost

- The proposed increase in spending for low-income families is estimated to cost the province about $240 million annually.

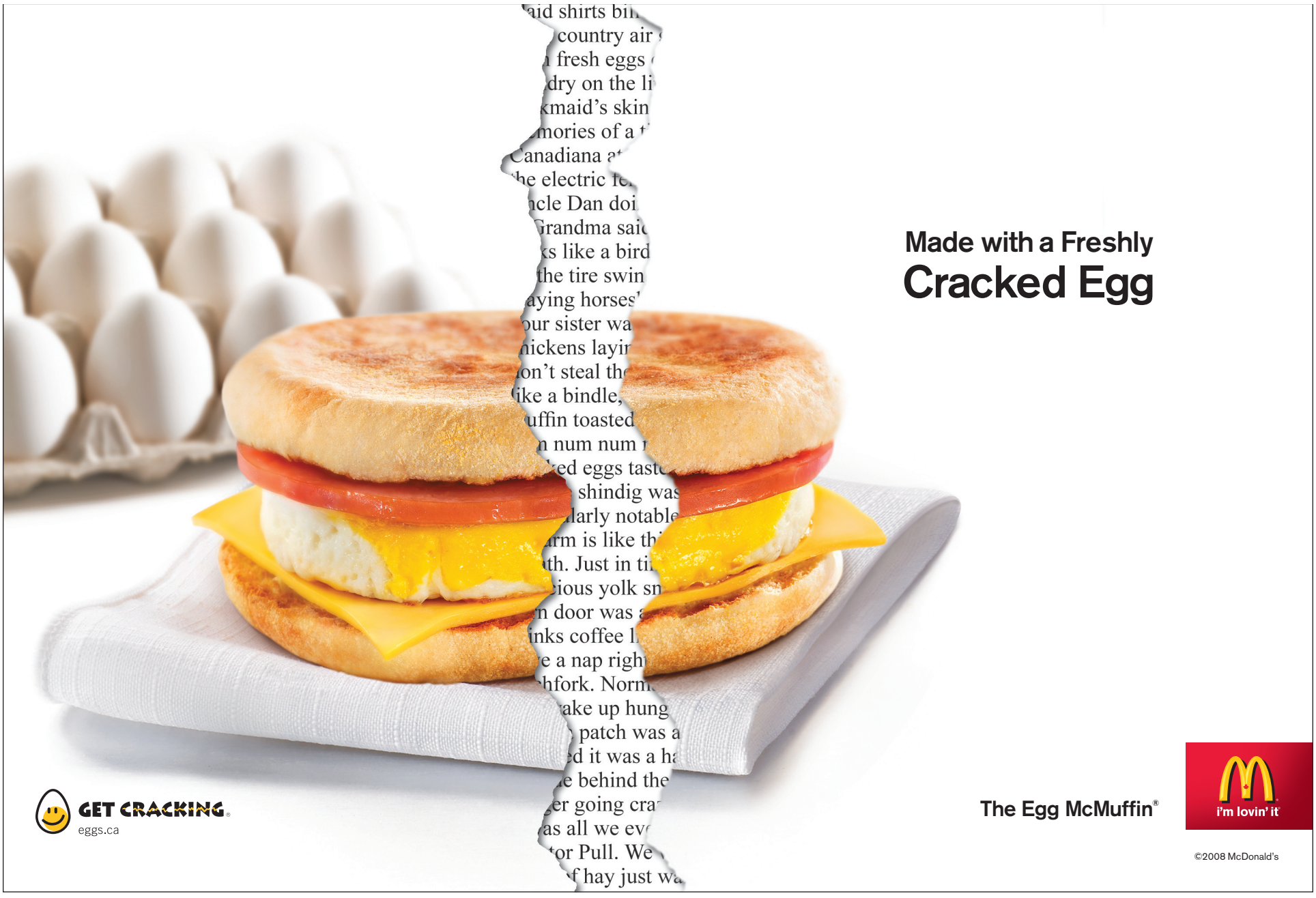
The group is releasing its detailed proposal today, and estimates the new benefit would provide an average $100 a month to about 194,000 low-income Ontario households renting in the private market.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

News in brief

DEFENCE The Canadian Forces is reportedly not tracking how many of its soldiers are suffering from service-related hearing loss and traumatic brain trauma, unlike counterparts in the U.S. and Britain.

POLITICS A new House of Commons' speaker will be voted on in a secret ballot when Parliament resumes sitting tomorrow. The speaker is responsible for policing house meetings. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**



Olympic mayors on the sidelines
The mayors of Vancouver and Whistler said they will have mainly ceremonial roles during the Olympic games. THE CANADIAN PRESS

RCMP grill recruits on drugs, sex, disputes

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The RCMP says the process is a crucial tool for screening out people unfit to wear the red serge in the post-9/11 era, when terrorists and other serious criminals are trying to infiltrate the police force.

A newly declassified RCMP assessment of the polygraph program's privacy implications says the force was "not doing a sufficient job" of weeding out unworthy applicants.

"Internal Affairs Branch reports that at any given time 40-50 members are suspended and a majority of these cases are related to criminal activity."

The Canadian Press obtained a copy of the privacy impact assessment through the Access to Information Act, along with a list of dozens of often highly personal questions put to prospective Mounties.

The Halifax Regional Municipality recently said it was reviewing the way it uses lie detectors to screen applicants for certain jobs, amid public controversy over polygraph queries of a similarly personal nature.

But the Mounties, who quietly introduced polygraph screening of applicants in November 2005, say the electronic tests help the force keep pace with other Canadian police services that use the technique. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Among the questions...

- Have you ever been involved in a domestic dispute?
- Do you associate with anyone who uses illegal drugs?
- What is the worst thing anyone is going to say you have done to them?
- Have you ever engaged in bestiality?

News in brief

ECONOMY As North American auto manufacturers plead with governments for a fraction of the help they've given the financial sector, industry players are divided over what form any aid should take. But there is widespread agreement that Canada can't ignore the issue or it runs the risk of being shut out of talks between the Big Three automakers and the U.S. government, leading to further job losses in this country. On Friday, Federal Industry Minister Tony Clement said he was investigating the possibility of a joint Canada-U.S. bailout of North America's ailing auto industry. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Albertans may be infected by reused needles
Alberta Health says it has contacted more than 1,000 people who may have been infected by the use of dirty syringes. The province says 954 patients who underwent endoscopies have been offered testing for hepatitis and HIV. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Separation issue divides PQ

By pushing the independence issue to the back burner, the Parti Quebecois has alienated some of its base and stands to divide the separatist vote when Quebecers go to the polls Dec. 8, say some hardline sovereigntists.

PQ Leader Pauline Marois has spent the first 10 days of the election campaign defending her image, slamming Premier Jean Charest and talking about the forestry sector, daycare spaces and public transit, but very little about the very reason the party was founded 40 years ago.

One of the few times Quebec independence has made headlines during the campaign came when Marois rejected the candidacy of a hardline sovereigntist who is a former PQ member of the legislature.

Marois' decision to exclude Jean-Claude St-Andre prompted the 25-year card-carrying Pequiste to leave the party and blast her for contravening PQ principles.

It also led to police having to intervene after a clash between PQ supporters and more radical separatist elements.

Mario Beaulieu, president of the Societe Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montreal, believes the PQ's failure to stay true to its mandate will hurt the party at the polls.

> **"A political party is not a religion. We should not have ayatollahs... The Parti Quebecois is a party of discussion."**
> Sovereigntist Yves Michaud

"It will fragment the vote," he said. "If sovereigntists don't have the impression that the Parti Quebecois will put sovereignty in the forefront, people will be less inclined to vote for them."

He said the PQ has also failed to address key factors that distinguish Quebec, namely language and culture.

Marois' decision to shelve the idea of a referendum is based on repeated opinion polls suggesting that Quebecers are not interested in another such vote after the 1980 and 1995 referendums.

Yves Michaud, another longtime sovereigntist, called last weekend's events "scandalous" and "shameful." He said the party has always accepted dissidence and opinions that may be counter to the majority.

"A political party is not a religion," he said. "We should not have ayatollahs... The Parti Quebecois is a party of discussion."

But while any internal strife might have a slight effect on the party's success on election day, Michaud expressed confidence the PQ will outperform the faltering Action democratique du Quebec and at least become the official Opposition.

As for independence, he said the "dream is dead" for his generation.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

News in brief

TRAVEL Via Rail is looking for a business partner to set up a web-based entertainment store so customers can download songs and videos for a fee, competing with giants like Apple Inc.'s iTunes store. The Crown corporation, which lost $200 million last year, is asking for so-called "expressions of interest" by Dec. 15, at which time it will decide whether to put the proposal out to formal tender.

TOURISM Cuba welcomed its two millionth tourist of 2008 on Friday with a salsa band and strong mojitos to travellers on an Air Canada flight. The island expects to set a record for foreign visitors despite three hurricanes and a global economic crisis. Canada, Brits and Italians rank among Cuba's top visitors. THE CANADIAN PRESS

TRANSITCITY

MOVING TORONTO INTO THE FUTURE

Why does Toronto need Transit City?

The Toronto Transit City Light Rail Plan is an exciting initiative that will revolutionize transit and transportation across Toronto. Its far-reaching lines will revitalize neighbourhoods, spur economic growth and clean the air we breathe. Seven new Light Rail Transit (LRT) lines will bring reliable, fast, quiet and comfortable transit service to many Toronto neighbourhoods.

What is Light Rail Transit?

Light Rail Transit (LRT) is an updated and improved version of the streetcars that have moved Torontonians for decades, and will bring a new concept of reliable and comfortable transit service to Toronto's busiest transit routes. Transit City routes will be fully accessible, so that people with all levels of mobility can use the service with confidence and ease.

WHERE TRANSIT CITY IS TAKING TORONTO

Don Mills
This 18-kilometre long line will run along the Don Mills Road corridor from the Bloor-Danforth Subway to Steeles Avenue and potentially into York Region.

Eglinton Crosstown
This 31-kilometre long route will link Kennedy Station in the east with Pearson Airport and the Mississauga Transitway in the west. The line will operate in an underground tunnel from approximately Laird Drive in the east to Keele Street in the west.

Etobicoke-Finch West
This 18-kilometre long route will link Finch Station with northern Etobicoke, provide direct service to Humber College and could be extended to Mississauga, the Woodbine racetrack or Pearson Airport.

Jane
This 17-kilometre long route will stretch along Jane Street from the Bloor-Danforth Subway to the new Steeles West Station on the Spadina Subway and, potentially, further into York Region.

Scarborough Malvern
This 15-kilometre long route will link Kennedy Station with northern Scarborough and Malvern, and provide direct service to the University of Toronto at Scarborough and Centennial College's Ellesmere Campus.

Sheppard East
This 14-kilometre long route will extend rapid transit service east from Don Mills Station to northern Scarborough, Malvern, and, potentially, Durham Region.

Waterfront West
This 11-kilometre long extension of the Harbourfront streetcar line will link Union Station and Exhibition Place with Parkdale, High Park, and southern Etobicoke, and could be extended into Mississauga.

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Israeli air strike kills four
An Israeli air strike killed four Palestinians as they fired mortars from the Gaza Strip yesterday, Palestinian officials said, just hours after another group of militants struck Israel in a separate rocket attack further shaking a five-month-old truce. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

World

Sailing around the world solo

Michael Perham, left, is attempting to become the youngest person to sail solo around the world. Perham, 16, left Portsmouth, England Saturday on his Open 50 Racing Yacht and was expected to be alone at sea for more than four months. His only contact with his family is to be through satellite link-ups. Perham says he plans to sleep in short breaks while the boat is controlled by an electronic auto-pilot. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

California wildfires calming

Calmer wind yesterday aided firefighters battling wildfires that have destroyed hundreds of homes in Southern California, forced thousands of residents to flee and blanketed much of the region with choking smoke.

There was a tremendous amount of damage done said Brea, Calif., Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa.

The fires had blackened more than 75 square kilometres since Thursday in parts of Los Angeles County, Riverside and Orange counties to the east, and Santa Barbara County to the northwest. More than 800 homes and apartments had been destroyed.

No deaths were reported, but police brought trained dogs yesterday morning to search the rubble of a mobile home park where some 500 homes were destroyed.

They were focusing on mobile homes where cars remained parked in front of the properties.

MINDY SCHAUER/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kim Bailey looks over the remnants of her dad's home following wildfires in Yorba Linda, Calif., yesterday. Her parents were on vacation when their home was destroyed Saturday.

"What you see is a devastation I've never seen before," said Villaraigosa, promising to do all he can to help residents. "We're going to rebuild, make no mistake about it."

Sunday's easing of the fierce Santa Ana wind allowed firefighters to set backfires in efforts to block the main fires from advancing into hillside neighbourhoods.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Iraq allowing U.S. to stay until 2011

SECURITY Iraq's cabinet yesterday approved a security pact with the United States that will allow American forces to stay in Iraq for three years after their United Nations mandate expires at the end of the year.

The decision followed months of difficult negotiations and, pending parliamentary approval, will remove a major point of contention between the two allies. Parliament's deputy speaker, Khalid al-Attiyah, said he expected the 275-member legislature to begin debating the document this week and vote on it by Nov. 24.

The U.S. government agreed last week to an Iraqi request to amend the draft. The amendment removed what al-Attiyah said was ambiguous language that could allow U.S. forces not to adhere to a timeline for their withdrawal from Iraqi cities by the end of June and from the entire country by Jan. 1, 2012.

suicide bombing

- Iraqi police say seven people have died in a suicide car bombing at a police checkpoint in Diyala province, northeast of Baghdad. The checkpoint is near the office of a Kurdish political party.

Government spokesman Ali al-Dabbagh said all but one of the 28 cabinet ministers who attended yesterday's meeting, in addition to al-Maliki, voted for the pact in a show of hands.

The cabinet has 37 members and it was not immediately clear why some ministers stayed away.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Subway collapse kills three

CHINA Rescuers searched yesterday for 17 workers missing after a subway tunnel they were building in eastern China caved in, killing at least three people, the state news agency said.

A 75-metre-wide section of road over the construction site collapsed in the eastern city of Hangzhou on Saturday, trapping workers and creating a huge crater into which at least 11 vehicles plunged.

Poor construction quality is a chronic problem in China, and is often blamed on bad planning, shoddy work or theft of materials.

"There is a slim chance for the survival of trapped workers because of heavy flooding in the crater," Wang Guangrong, spokesman for the rescue team, said yesterday.

Officials are warning there could be further collapses. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

17 workers were missing after a subway tunnel they were building in eastern China caved in, killing at least three people.

News in brief

BRIDGE COLLAPSE A bridge under construction over an icy Himalayan river in Indian-controlled Kashmir collapsed yesterday, leaving at least 23 workers missing and feared dead. Police are searching the banks of the river, but no bodies or survivors have been found. The bridge is near the de facto border that separates India and Pakistan, which both claim the Himalayan region. Police say it's not immediately clear what caused the bridge to fall. Construction accidents are common in India, where little regard is paid to safety.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Vitamins won't stop cancer: Study

HEALTH Vitamin C or E pills do not help prevent cancer in men, concludes the same big study that last week found these supplements ineffective for warding off heart disease.

The public has been whipsawed by good and bad news about vitamins, much of it from test-tube or animal studies and hyped manufacturer claims. Even when researchers compare people's diets and find that a vitamin seems to help, the benefit may not translate when that nutrient is obtained a different way, such as a pill.

"Clinical trials such as this are rapidly closing the door on the hope that common vitamin supplements may protect against cancer." Marji McCullough

"Well-conducted clinical trials such as this are rapidly closing the door on the hope that common vitamin supplements may protect against cancer," said Marji McCullough, nutrition chief at the American Cancer Society. "It's still possible that some benefit exists for subgroups that couldn't be measured, but the overall results are certainly discouraging."

The study was funded by the National Institutes of Health and several vitamin makers.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Shooting at the Waldorf-Astoria

Gunfire erupted in New York City's storied Waldorf-Astoria hotel during a brazen robbery attempt Saturday at a lobby jewelry store, wounding a security guard and sending guests diving for cover. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Inauguration tickets will be a hot item

CONGRESS Even if a member of the U.S. Congress has declared a first-come, first-serve policy on handing out hard-to-get tickets to Barack Obama's presidential swearing-in, be aware "first" doesn't necessarily mean number one in line.

Even the most honest members of Congress have family members, friends, political contributors and others clamouring for what are the most sought-after 240,000 free tickets in the world.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Obama's team starts taking shape

President-elect Barack Obama is forming a White House leadership team that combines experienced Washington insiders who can help build a bridge with Congress and trusted associates who share his Chicago roots.

The West Wing appointments that Obama has announced in recent days stand in contrast to those of George W. Bush, who relied heavily on fellow Texans for top posts. They had virtually no experience dealing with Congress, nor did the former Texas governor who was their boss.

Biden's role

• Joe Biden has said he intends to be a frequent voice on the Hill and use his experience to promote the administration's agenda. That's a departure from Vice-President Dick Cheney, who only appeared occasionally on the Hill to meet with Republican members and cast a tie-breaking vote.

Obama comes to the Oval Office with an ambitious list of campaign promises that will require Capitol Hill's co-operation and approval, and his team is heavy on the legislative experience that Obama is lacking. He resigned his Illinois Senate seat yesterday after just under four years of service, half of which he spent out on the presidential campaign trail.

During that time, Obama had Pete Rouse as his Senate chief of staff to take care of his business on the Hill. Yesterday, Obama named Rouse to be a senior adviser in his White House.

Rouse has 24 years of experience as a top Senate aide, also running the offices of former Senate Democratic leader Tom Daschle of South Dakota and Obama's Illinois colleague, Democrat Senator Dick Durbin.

Other names that have begun to roll out recently come with varying degrees of Washington experience. Obama is drawing on accomplished Chicago friends, longtime congressional aides and former Clinton administration officials, including some with ties to the Monica Lewinsky scandal.

The new chief of staff, Representative Rahm Emanuel, combines Chicago roots and the legislative connections. Vice president-elect Joe Biden's chief of staff Ron Klain held the same role for former vice-president Al Gore.

Obama has picked Mona Sutphen and Jim Messina as his deputy chiefs of staff. Like Rouse, Messina has served as chief of staff for three different legislators and has a vast network of relationships to show for it that he can tap on Obama's behalf.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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News in brief

QUAKE A powerful earthquake struck waters off Indonesia early this morning, briefly generating a tsunami warning for coastlines within 1,000 km of the epicentre. Residents in nearby coastal towns fled their homes in panic, but there were no immediate reports of damage or injuries. The U.S. Geological Survey put the quake's preliminary magnitude at 7.5.

WORD Meh, the expression of indifference or boredom, has gained a place in the Collins English Dictionary. The dictionary defines "meh" as an expression of indifference or boredom, or an adjective meaning mediocre or boring.

CEASEFIRE Congo's main rebel leader promised a United Nations envoy yesterday to support a ceasefire and UN efforts to end the conflict, even as more heavy fighting was reported in the east.

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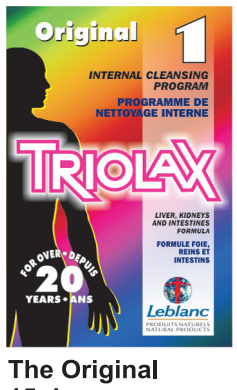

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Comment & Views

Comment

Time to see green in the red

GuestEditor

James Blunt
Artist & Metro World News Guest Editor

This year, I have visited more than 180 cities on my world tour, and wherever I went — from Aberdeen to Auckland — one thing never failed to amaze me: air conditioning. It was blasting at sub-arctic levels in nearly every hotel I stayed, when most times it would have been just as easy — and better for the environment — to open a window.

To me, hotel air conditioning is a small but telling reminder of the luxuries we have grown so accustomed to in an age of prosperity but could often do without. They are things — like SUVs, or fish caught half a world away or even disposable hand wipes — that barely improve our daily lives but, altogether, are taking a terrible toll on our planet.

So, as we read in newspapers like Metro about the economic slowdown, I wonder if there might be a silver lining in such grim news: The possibility that after a period of so much consumption, we might cut back a bit on extravagances we don't need, and give our over-worked planet a bit of a breather?

I realize that many people roll their eyes when a celebrity preaches about the environment — or rescuing baby seals, or any other worthy cause. (I don't like preaching, either, and — contrary to what you might have read in the tabloids — I don't think of myself as a celebrity).

As an army officer and a musician, I have had the privilege of seeing some of the planet's natural treasures. Sadly, I have also seen the way that we abuse it by dropping bombs and building shopping malls.

"You can remind our leaders that the environment should not depend on the stock market."

I don't pretend to be an environmental expert, but I am learning. Before my concerts, we screen a preview of An Inconvenient Truth, the remarkable documentary by former U.S. vice-president Al Gore (www. anin convenienttruth.com.au). I am installing solar panels at home, and for every ticket to one of my concerts sold online, we plant a tree.

I'm a supporter of The Big Ask. It is a campaign by Friends of the Earth to get governments to reduce carbon dioxide emissions — the main cause of global warming. Thanks to them, the European Union is now debating laws that would force members to cut emissions by 20 per cent by 2020. If approved, it would be the most ambitious plan in the world, and just might convince the U.S., China and others to come aboard.

Unfortunately, some politicians are pointing to the economy and saying that now is not the time to fight global warming. I think they have it backwards: We cannot afford to wait any longer. Global warming is a problem that is only going to get worse, and more costly to fix, the longer we delay. By joining The Big Ask, you can remind our leaders that the environment should not depend on the stock market.

And one more thing: next time you switch on the air conditioning, think about cracking a window open instead.

James Blunt is a British pop singer-songwriter whose hit single You're Beautiful catapulted him to fame. He is currently touring Canada.

Views

Support girls' drive for education

By MAXINE CROOK

Horrific news: Two men in Afghanistan sprayed battery acid in the faces of eight teenage girls just because they were heading to school.

Encouraging news: Five days later, from her hospital bed, 17-year-old Shamsia Husainai, her face a mass of excruciating burns and one eye blinded, bravely insists: "I will go to my school even if they kill me. I will continue my studies."

Shamsia shares this yearning for an education with 50 million girls who do not get to go to school.

While it's true that many boys also don't have access to education, far more girls lose out on this basic human right. If a family must choose which of their children to educate, it's almost always a boy. Some cultures and religions discourage or forbid the education of girls. And girls, no matter how young, bear the burden of daily work at home, fetching water and firewood, looking after siblings, helping grow food.

This is a tragedy not just for the girls, but for the world! Study after study by international big players — the World Bank, UNICEF, Oxfam — all prove that when girls are educated, amazing things happen: poverty drops, the health of families greatly improves, economies grow.

Maxine Crook

A woman who has even a basic education enrolls her children in school, has them immunized, has fewer children and knows how to keep them healthy. She is more likely to practise family planning, and has a lower incidence of HIV/AIDS.

A girl with education earns more, which gives her a voice at home and in her community. "Ending global poverty begins with women's rights," according to Oxfam. Women's rights begin with education.

Even the cowardly thugs who threw acid on schoolgirls will not be able to stop girls from pursuing an education. Girls know what they are missing, and when they get a chance, they do brilliantly well.

Metro is a proud sponsor of Give Girls A Chance.

I am a volunteer with Give Girls A Chance (give girlsachance.org), raising funds for projects that educate girls. I have seen their drive, their optimism, their hard work despite the most difficult backgrounds.

I think of Millicent Obiero, 14, an orphan in Kenya who made it from her tiny village to a high school far away, now near the top of her class.

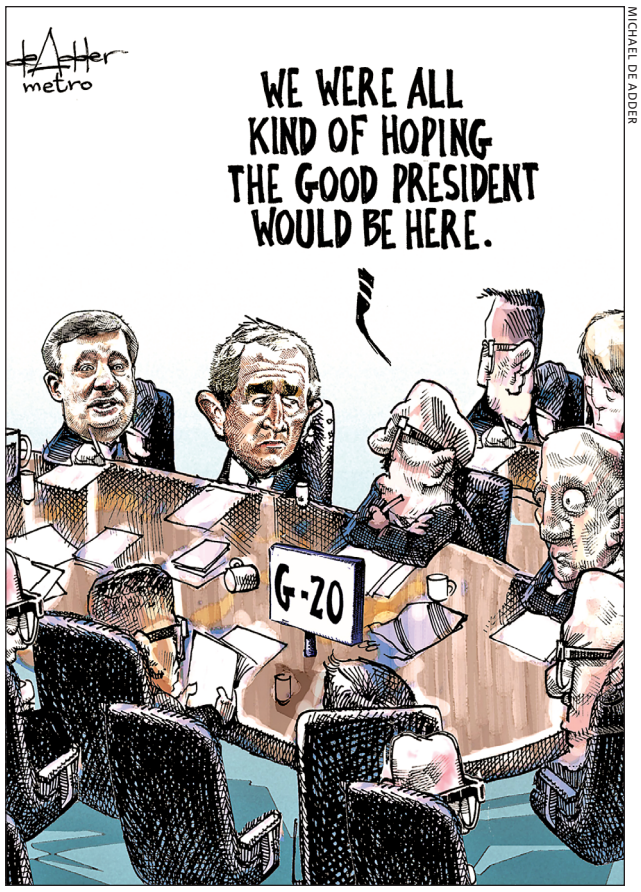
I think of 10-year-old Selma, in Grade 4 in rural Pakistan, who writes: "My father dislikes my getting an education, so I earn my fees cleaning houses after school."

Each of us can help girls like Millicent, Selma and Shamsia by donating to organizations that fund education and women's rights, (e.g. Oxfam, PlanCanada), or Give Girls A Chance, which only funds girls' education.

Maxine Crook is a documentary maker and fund adviser to Give Girls A Chance (give girlsachance.org), a Canadian charity that raises money to educate girls in Canada and around the world.

RAFIQ MAQBOOL/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Shamsia Husainai, 17, lies on a bed at a hospital in Kabul Friday after an acid attack on her last Wednesday in Kandahar, Afghanistan.



MICHAEL DE ADDER

Letters

Charlotte M. Bowering, SCARBOROUGH

I have always wondered who's minding the country? Certainly not the prime minister. We allow a separatist to take part at the federal level, bent on breaking up the country. It just doesn't make sense to me.

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Amtrak CEO steps down

Amtrak's CEO Alex Kummant has resigned after two years on the job and following unspecified differences with the board of the national passenger railroad. Kummant had taken over for David Gunn, who was fired in 2005. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Business

Housing slowdown speeds up

The value of an existing Canadian home is worth $30,000 less than a year ago, as the accelerated pace of the housing slowdown continues to surprise analysts. Sales declined by a stunning 35 per cent in the Toronto area in October compared with a year ago, while prices were down 10 per cent, according to figures released Friday by the Canadian Real Estate Association. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

EDITOR: FERMIN DESOUZA, FERMIN.DESOUZA@METRONEWS.CA

Business in brief

WIND FARMS Independent wind producers are facing big hikes in debt costs, raising doubt on whether ambitious construction goals will be met over the next few years, say financing experts. Recently, EarthFirst Canada Inc., the proponent of a major wind farm in British Columbia, declared it was seeking creditor protection. In addition to the Dokie 1 wind farm in B.C., and the smaller Nuttby wind project in Nova Scotia, the company also has permits for further projects in B.C. and Ontario.

OIL More oil output reductions aren't likely this month because OPEC members haven't yet fully enforced previous quotas and the organization needs more data before it reaches a decision, the group's president said yesterday. Chakib Khelil's comments came as Iran called for a new output cut of at least one million barrels per day, in addition to the 1.5 million cut decided on Oct. 24 METRO NEWS SERVICES

How low can oil go?

One economist sees $45 a barrel next year

A little more than four months ago, there appeared to be no end in sight to oil's spectacular run, with some calling for prices to hit $200 US a barrel.

But crude has been on a steep, virtually uninterrupted downward slide since hitting a record of $147 on July 11.

Economists, who mere months ago struggled to pinpoint crude's peak, are now pondering just the opposite question: how much lower can it go?

TD economist Derek Burleton says oil prices will likely fall to $45 by early next year, and perhaps even lower in the short term.

Under a more pessimistic scenario — with global growth at 0.9 per cent rather than 2 per cent — oil could dip below $30, he said. TD sees prices rising to the $70-$75-a-barrel range by the end of next year — but not flirting with the $150 mark again. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Current price

- Crude for December delivery closed at $57.04 per barrel Friday — a more than 60 per cent decline from its all-time high of $147 in July.

BMO first to slash mortgage rate

There were preliminary indications Friday that residential mortgage rates could be drifting lower after Bank of Montreal announced a "special" offer of 5.25 per cent on its benchmark five-year, fixed-rate home loan.

BMO said the new rate takes effect today and would be available to "all new and existing" customers. Its current posted rate on that product is 7.2 per cent. A spokesperson said the new rate is not subject to an expiry date. Nonetheless, mortgage rates can generally change at any time.

It was unclear whether BMO's move marked the beginning of a larger trend. Traditionally, five-year, fixed-rate mortgages are the most popular loan option for homeowners.

BMO's announcement comes two days after Finance Minister Jim Flaherty tripled the size of the federal government's mortgage purchase program to $75 billion. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

G20 leaders head home after talks

The emergency G20 summit this past weekend brought together leaders from nations that have spent centuries as far apart politically and philosophically as they are geographically.

That doesn't mean, however, that there weren't tough pills to swallow and tensions along the way as the leaders of the far-flung G20 nations, including Prime Minister Stephen Harper, formulated a broad action plan aimed at combatting their mutual menace on numerous fronts.

The magnitude of the crisis is such that Harper emerged from the summit to suggest he would cast aside his longtime aversion to deficit spending and dole out whatever cash was necessary if it was for the good of the world's financial health.

"We will fulfil our part of that agreement," he said. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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LeBron confident Sabathia will be a Yankee

LeBron James is convinced his friend CC Sabathia will end up in pinstripes. The Cleveland Cavaliers superstar and New York Yankees fan wants his favourite baseball team to land Sabathia. The Yankees have formulated a proposal to Sabathia that would exceed Johan Santana's $137.5 million, six-year contract with the Mets both in total and average. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Sports

Manning throws for 320 yards

Peyton Manning led the Indianapolis Colts on four straight scoring drives in the second half, wiping out two Houston leads and giving the Colts a 33-27 victory yesterday. It was the third straight win for Indy, who find themselves back in the mix for an AFC wild card spot.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

SPORTS@METRONEWS.CA

Raptors survive the Heat

NBA RESULT

Heat 96 **Raptors** 107

THE SKINNY: Chris Bosh scored 27 points and Jermaine O'Neal grabbed 18 rebounds to lead the Raptors to a 107-96 victory over the Miami Heat, snapping Toronto's two-game losing streak.

NO JOSE: Despite the four-day break since straining his right hamstring against Philadelphia last Wednesday, Jose Calderon sat out with Will Solomon starting in his place. Solomon played well, scoring 15 points and dishing out 11 assists.

LINEUP CHANGES: In addition to Solomon starting at the point, coach Sam Mitchell went bigger up front, starting seven-footer Andrea Bargnani at the 3 spot.

THE QUOTE: "We've just **got to find a way to get more out of that position,"** said Mitchell on playing Bargnani at small forward. "**Andrea does give you a viable option of scoring."**

SPREADING IT AROUND: Seven Raptors scored in double digits for Toronto (5-4), with Bargnani contributing 12 points, O'Neal adding 11, and Anthony Parker and Jason Kapono scoring 10 apiece.

THE NEGATIVES: Despite the 11-point win, the Raptors committed 17 turnovers in the game and allowed Miami to hang around until late in the fourth quarter.

THE NO TV: Many in southern Ontario were unable to watch the game because the broadcaster, TSN2, is still not carried by Rogers cable.

THE NEXT GAMES: The Raptors begin a two-game swing through Florida tomorrow night in Orlando, then face a rematch with the Heat Wednesday night in Miami.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

THE CANADIAN PRESS/FRANK GUNN

Heat guard Dwyane Wade is fouled by the Raptors' Jermaine O'Neal in the second half yesterday afternoon.

Burris ready for Grey Cup

He proved he can win the big game. Now Henry Burris has the chance to show he can win the biggest one of all.

The quarterback exorcised his playoff demons Saturday when he led the Calgary Stampeders past the B.C. Lions 22-18 in the West Division final. The win ended talk that Burris couldn't lead the Stamps to a big win after the team was bounced from the opening round of the CFL post-season in the three previous seasons.

But Burris says the monkey isn't completely off his back. Only hoisting the Grey Cup trophy above his head can effectively do that.

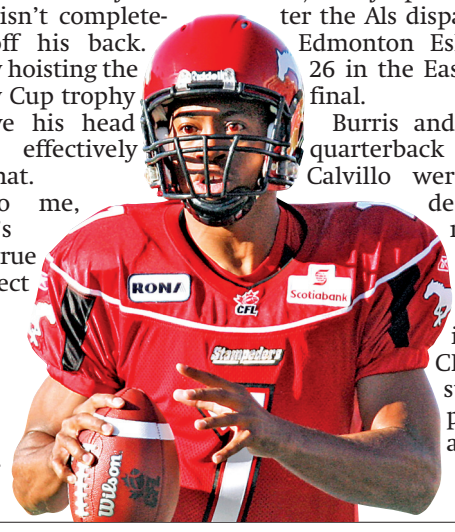
"To me, that's the true respect that you can earn by winning a championship," Burris said. "There's nothing better than that.

"To beat a Montreal team in its home town, a great team that showed its true colours by coming out and playing a great game against Edmonton, that's going to be tough. But if there is a group of guys I feel comfortable with it's the guys in our locker-room."

Calgary will face the Montreal Alouettes in the CFL championship game next Sunday (TSN, 6 p.m. ET) at Olympic Stadium after the Als dispatched the Edmonton Eskimos 36-26 in the East Division final.

Burris and Montreal quarterback Anthony Calvillo were already destined to meet during Grey Cup week as finalists for the CFL's outstanding player award.

THE CANADIAN PRESS



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Eagles and Bengals play to NFL's first tie in six years
Cincinnati's Shayne Graham missed a 47-yard field goal with seven seconds left in overtime to ensure the NFL's first tie since Nov. 10, 2002. Eagles QB Donovan McNabb fumbled and threw three interceptions in the game. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tennessee rallies late, stays unbeaten

NFL ROUNDUP

Titans 24, Jaguars 14

Behind, ahead. Home, away. Backups, starters. No matter the situation, the Tennessee Titans keep finding ways to win.

And stay unbeaten. Tennessee overcame a 14-3 halftime deficit, got solid play from third-string cornerback Chris Carr and extended its franchise-record winning streak in the regular season to 13. The Titans also won their seventh consecutive regular-season road game. The Jaguars (4-6) lost for the fourth time in six games and probably ended any chance they had of returning to the postseason.

AP PHOTO/MIKE ROEMER

The Green Bay Packers' Jason Hunter celebrates with the crowd after returning a fumble for a touchdown during their game against the Chicago Bears yesterday. Green Bay won 37-3.

PACKERS 37, BEARS 3

Ryan Grant hit his stride — and justified his big contract — for the Green Bay Packers yesterday, rushing for 145 yards and a touchdown in a dominant 37-3 victory over the Chicago Bears.

The win boosts the Packers (5-5) into a three-way tie with the Bears and Minnesota Vikings atop the muddled NFC North.

GIANTS 30, RAVENS 10

The New York Giants (9-1) amassed more than 200 yards rushing for the third straight game in a 30-10 victory over the Baltimore Ravens yesterday. The Giants finished with 207 yards rushing against a defence that had not given up more than 76 yards to any opponent this season. The last time an opponent got more than 100 yards was Seattle, which ran for 144 on Dec. 23, 2007.

STEELERS 11, CHARGERS 10

Willie Parker ran for 115 yards and Jeff Reed's third field goal won it with 11 seconds remaining as Pittsburgh rallied to beat the Chargers. The 11-10 final was the first in NFL history, and it was in jeopardy when Troy Polamalu returned an errant lateral 12 yards for an apparent touchdown on the final play, but it was overturned on replay.

Elsewhere in the NFL it was: Denver 24, Atlanta 20; New Orleans 30, Kansas City 20; Miami 17, Oakland 15; Tampa Bay 19, Minnesota 13; Carolina 31, Detroit 22; San Francisco 35, St. Louis 16; and Arizona 26, Seattle 20. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sports in brief

SPEED SKATING Christine Nesbitt and Kristina Groves proved to be a powerhouse duo at yesterday's World Cup speedskating meet in the Netherlands. Nesbitt won the 1,000m final in one minute 16.18 seconds. That was 0.58 seconds ahead of Ottawa's Groves, who also clinched the 1500 on Saturday. Nesbitt, a London, Ont., native also collected a bronze in the 1500.

NHL Darryl Sydor is going back for a third stint with the Dallas Stars. The Stars acquired the defenceman yesterday from the Penguins in exchange for blue liner Philippe Boucher. Sydor has a goal and an assist in eight games for Pittsburgh this season. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Western, Laval on to Vanier

Western's Jesse Bellamy lifts the Mitchell Bowl yesterday.

CIS The Western Ontario Mustangs advanced to the Vanier Cup after beating the Saint Mary's Huskies 28-12 in the Mitchell Bowl yesterday.

The No. 3 Mustangs will meet No. 1-ranked Laval in the Canadian Interuniversity Sport football final next Saturday in Hamilton. The Rouge et Or easily beat the No. 6 Calgary Dinos 59-10 in the Uteck Bowl earlier in the day. Western's win comes after losing 52-20 in last year's Mitchell Bowl to eventual Vanier Cup champions Manitoba. After winning their second Yates Cup championship in as many years, the Mustangs advance to their 12th Vanier Cup appearance. They hold a 6-5 record in the Vanier, with their last championship coming in 1989 with a 35-10 win over Saskatchewan. THE CANADIAN PRESS

SCOREBOARD

NHL

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS
Carolina 3 Tampa Bay 2 (SO)
Montreal 3 St. Louis 2 (SO)
Philadelphia 4 Atlanta 3
San Jose 6 Chicago 5
Los Angeles at Anaheim

TONIGHT'S GAMES
Boston at **TORONTO**
Vancouver at N.Y. Islanders
Ottawa at N.Y. Rangers
Edmonton at Detroit
San Jose at Nashville

NBA

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS
TORONTO 107 Miami 96
Orlando 90 Charlotte 85
Dallas 124 New York 114 (OT)
Detroit at Phoenix
Minnesota at Denver
San Antonio at Sacramento

NFL

TONIGHT'S GAME
Cleveland at Buffalo

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Going Green

Water down the drain

Canadians on average use 343 litres of water each day. Use of water in the average Canadian household: Bathroom (other than toilets – 35 per cent), toilets (30 per cent), laundry (20 per cent), kitchen and drinking (10 per cent), cleaning (5 per cent), according to Greeniology: How To Live Well, Be Green And Make A Difference by Tanya Ha.

EDITOR: MIKE DEREZYCKY, MIKE.DEREZYCKY@METRONEWS.CA

B.C. has identity crisis

ScienceMatters

David Suzuki & Dr. Faisal Moola

If you live in or have visited British Columbia recently, you'll have noticed a campaign to sell the province as "The Best Place on Earth." The government has spent tens of millions of dollars branding the province, and the tag-line for its PR campaign appears to be everywhere: on television and radio, on billboards, bus shelters, licence plates, and just about everywhere else you look. And as we enter the home stretch to the 2010 Olympics hosted by B.C., the campaign is reaching a fevered pitch.

Those of us who live among the towering mountains, old-growth forests, and pristine lakes and rivers feel we deserve these bragging rights on occasion. And ecologists tell us that B.C. is blessed with an exceptional diversity of wildlife and wilderness, on par with some of the greatest places on the planet, such as the Serengeti and the Great Barrier Reef.

My home province is Canada's richest region biologically — home to 76 per cent of our nation's bird species, 70 per cent of its freshwater fish, 60 per cent of its evergreen trees, and thousands of other animals and plants. More than 3,800 species are found here, and many of these, such as mountain goat and mountain caribou, live mostly — or only — in the province and nowhere else on the planet.

For others, such as the trumpeter swan and sandhill crane, B.C. is a critical wintering ground or stopover in winged migrations that extend over thousands of kilometres.

JUSTIN SULLIVAN/GETTY IMAGES

B.C. is now the last safe haven for most of the large animals.

Most remarkably, unlike most places in North America, B.C. still has all of the large and charismatic megafauna that were present at the time of European settlement, including grizzly bears, wolves, and cougars. Indeed, British Columbia is now the last safe haven for most of the large animals left on the continent.

For example, grizzlies still roam, feed, and breed throughout much of the province, whereas in California, this majestic bruin is now only found as an image on the state's flag, having long been eliminated from the wild.

B.C. has a rich legacy to protect, yet the experts tell us that we are squandering our unique biological inheritance. Earlier this year, scientists revealed that more than four dozen species have disappeared from the province, and the casualty list is growing. A further 1,600 species (43 per cent of all the plants and animals thought to exist in the province) are also in decline and are perhaps facing a similar fate unless action is taken.

These statistics are not just an abstract tally. To the contrary, many residents and visitors to the province have personally experienced these plants and animals in nature — perhaps seen a grizzly bear while on a camping trip, or hooked a salmon on one of our pristine rivers, or been dazzled by a pod of orcas while kayaking.

You don't even have to go far from populated areas: the remaining patches of Canada's most endangered forest ecosystem, the Garry oak savannah, can be found in downtown Victoria!

Given the biodiversity crisis that is unfolding in my home province, I'm shocked that the government can claim we're the "best place on earth". We lag behind virtually every other place in North America in providing legal protection for our wildlife. B.C. stands out in Canada for not having an endangered species law, while smaller provinces such as New Brunswick and Nova Scotia have gone to great lengths to legally protect endangered species and their habitat. Even developing countries, such as Mexico, Costa Rica, and "the glorious nation" of Kazakhstan (to quote Borat) have a leg up on us, with endangered species laws on the books.

I'm proud of my province, and like most residents and visitors to British Columbia, I want to make sure that the natural heritage that we're blessed with is protected for my children and grandchildren to enjoy.

However, in light of the government's ad campaign, I think the province needs an identity check.

The government needs to reconcile its efforts to brand this province on the basis of its natural wonders with our true identity as one of the "last places on earth" without an endangered species law to protect the very things that make my home great.

Take David Suzuki's Nature Challenge and learn more at www.davidsuzuki.org.

Dr. David T. Suzuki is a Vancouver-based award-winning scientist, environmentalist and broadcaster.

Sustainable relationships through green dating?

NADIA LODDO
for Metro Canada

It's not a romantic rendezvous, but it seduces! On the ninth floor of an office building on the most beautiful avenue in the world, the Champs-Elysées (Paris), every month a "green dating" session takes place.

In front of a breathtaking view of the Eiffel Tower, managers, business people, lawyers, members of associations, journalists and others working on sustainable development meet to share their experience and exchange their complementary points of view on sustainable and green economy.

Organized by a French on-line magazine, ECOlife, on the premises of a Parisian law office, the "green dating" copies the idea of "speed dating", a way to make romantic encounters without wasting time.

At every meeting, three people present their action in connection with sustainable development. Each of them have no more than seven minutes to make their point, then another seven minutes to answer questions.

Talks to focus on good jobs for a new green economy

David Foster and Deena Ladd will be the keynote speakers for the Good Jobs Summit on Saturday at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre.

Foster, executive director of the Blue-Green Alliance, will speak about a unique partnership of the United Steelworkers, Communications Workers of America, Sierra Club and Natural Resources Defense Council that is on the leading edge of developing good jobs for a new green economy in the Untied States.

Ladd, co-ordinator of the Workers' Action Centre in Toronto, will speak about the growing number of workers in precarious employment and the need for good jobs to be part of the Ontario government's poverty reduction strategy.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Aims

- The Good Jobs Coalition assembled earlier this year to begin a focused dialogue on how to improve living and working conditions in Canada's largest urban centre. Its goal is to develop strategies that affirm the values of a truly just society: Healthy communities, a sustainable economy, strong public services, equity, access to post-secondary education and training, and decent work for all.

Clean furnace filter cuts energy use
Clean – or replace – your furnace filter. A dirty filter forces your furnace to work harder to heat your home. According to the Ontario Conservation Bureau, a clean filter can cut your energy use by five per cent. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Warm up to a green Christmas

The days of "Green Christmas" stirring up images of crying children and melting snowmen are endangered. With environmental consciousness proving more and more popular, a "Green Christmas" takes on a whole new meaning. Just ask Derek Szeto, founder of Canada's largest bargain hunting and shopping information website RedFlagDeals.com: "Our readers … not only judge retailers and products based on price, but also on ecological soundness. The demand for eco-friendly products and retailer and manufacturer accountability is growing."

Gifts

- Even popular gifts are getting greener — Apple's 3G iPhone's manufacturing process has been refined and the phone is now almost PVC-free. Its parts are also manufactured without bromine and mercury.

And companies are listening, too. Shelves upon shelves of incandescent holiday lights have been replaced by power saving LED based lights.

When you stroll (or wrestle) your way through a shopping mall this year, you'll see a growing number of people toting around branded reusable shopping provided by retailers.

Stop for a coffee and you might find a selection of organically grown coffees to choose from.

"Green" companies are gaining popularity as well. Lush, a popular cosmetics company that operates over 500 stores around the world makes extensive use of organic fruits and vegetables and doesn't test on animals.

NEWS CANADA

Cool Ideas combat climate change

The concept of eating local is hardly new territory, but it's fair to say Fergus "the Forager" Drennan has taken the idea to another extreme.

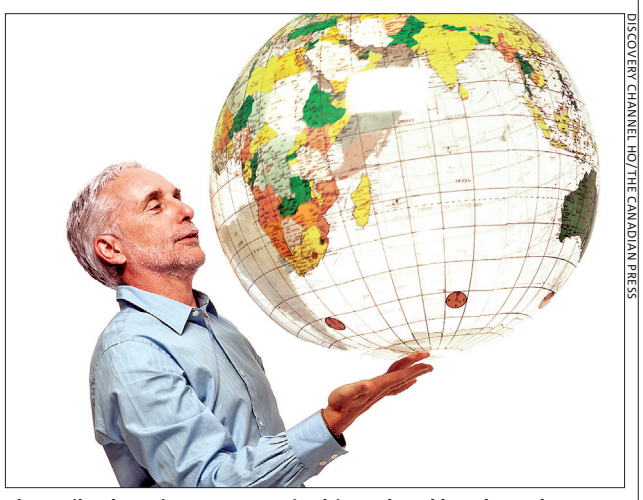
That's because the British man isn't heading to the market to shop for dinner — he's gathering virtually everything he eats from nature. And it goes beyond gathering wild garlic — even fresh roadkill is on the menu, comprising an estimated five per cent of his diet.

The ultimate step, beyond organic and eating locally and seasonally, is consuming wild food: taking just what's needed daily, free from packaging and guilt about "being part of the horrible cycle of destruction."

Drennan is featured in a new book by award-winning science writer and Daily Planet host Jay Ingram exploring the efforts of everyday individuals — extreme and otherwise — to reduce their carbon footprint and work towards addressing the warming of the world.

The Daily Planet Book of Cool Ideas (Penguin Canada) is an adaptation of a weeklong series that originally aired on the Discovery Channel program in March 2007.

Global Warning: A Daily Planet Special Series examined what could be done to reverse global warming and steps that some people were taking to create a sustainable future.


DISCOVERY CHANNEL HO/THE CANADIAN PRESS

The Daily Planet's Jay Ingram, in this undated handout photo from the Discovery Channel, explores the efforts of everyday people to reduce their carbon footprint in a new book.

"Is he going to do anything about global warming? No," Ingram said of Drennan. "But I think the point is to get people thinking out of the box. It's not just insulate your basement or buy a smaller, more fuel-efficient car, but it's to really think differently about just about everything."

"I think in the long run it's about more than global warming," he added. "It's really about (the fact that) by 2050 there are going to be nine billion people on the planet, and if we haven't learned to be more sustainable in every single way then it's going to be miserable."

Ingram said the book also delves into other issues that weren't explored in the series, such as environmentally sustainable housing.

It includes details on a "net-zero" home in Edmonton where the harnessing of solar energy allows it to give back as much electricity to the grid as it draws over the course of a year.

It also features profiles of a woman in her mid-80s who uses a solar oven, and a 16-year-old student and part-time lifeguard who converted his dad's pick-up truck into a plug-in electric vehicle.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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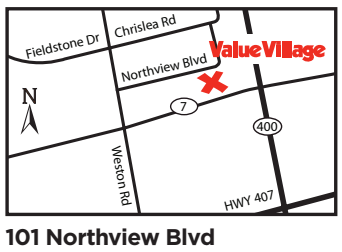

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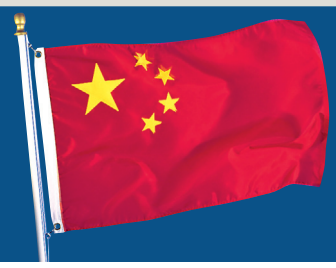
McGill among top 27 business school in global survey

McGill University was named one of the leading 27 business schools in the world, according to a survey by Eduniversal. Along with McGill, HEC Montreal, U of T, Western, Queen's and UBC made the top 100 list. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Workology



Recruiting China

To maintain international dominance, elite American colleges are scouring China to recruit top high school students who believe such schools are unaffordable and out of reach.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

EDITOR: DOUGLAS DUNLOP, DOUGLAS.DUNLOP@METRONEWS.CA

This job is a family affair

OddJobs

Diane Peters

Adoption practitioners help families take children out of orphanages and put them into loving homes.

If you think adoption is a straightforward process, talk to Sandra Webb. She's helped couples become parents through Children's Aid and private and international adoptions for the last 13 years.

Back in 1997, the now 56-year-old from Cobourg, Ont., drove with a Quebec couple for eight hours through a cold Russian winter day to meet their child in the hallway of an orphanage. She joined them the next day in court where they legally adopted the baby.

Yes, that was a little unusual. But it's her job to prepare prospective parents for the unexpected and the trying, as well as the wonderful.

As an adoption practitioner, she doesn't normally trip around the globe — although she did go to Russia twice — but spends her time talking with prospective parents as part of the home study portion of an adoption.

Once a couple's (or single person's, if that's the case) paperwork is in order — police checks, fingerprint checks and medicals — and once they've completed a special adoption training course, she evaluates them as possible parents. She meets with them at least four times (one interview is always in their home) and collects reference letters from friends and family. The process takes around three months and at the end she prepares a report.

"Yes, it's my job to assess them, and their big concern is whether they'll be approved," she says. "But part of my job is education."

She prepares families for that first meeting with their child and the potential cultural issues when the child comes from a different racial background.

Doe she ever "fail" families? "If it was a decision not to adopt, we've made that choice together," she says. That's only happened once or twice.

After a child has been adopted, she also does followup visits according to the type of adoption (with China, for instance, the final one is 36 months after adoption).

Webb had a degree in child studies from the University of Guelph when she moved to Cobourg to get married in the early 1970s. She got a job at the Children's Aid Society there, as an intake worker. She eventually started doing some work there with adoptions of crown wards, and loved it.

In 1995, after working on and off for Children's Aid, as well as doing some work in private adoption, she officially went into private practice as an adoption practitioner.

She does this half the time and the other half she offers therapy, mainly for families who have adopted and who are struggling. She gets to see it all: the frustration of waiting for a child, the joy of having one finally arrive, plus the challenge of building a brand new family.

Diane Peters once hawked magic pens at the Canadian National Exhibition. She's now a writer and part-time journalism instructor.

The Lowdown

Job title: Adoption practitioner

Salary: A home study costs about $2,200

Education/Training: Today, you need a masters and adoption experience to be certified in Ontario; Webb was grandfathered into the system because of her considerable experience

Best Part of the Job: "Being a part of families' lives, during the good and the difficult."

Worst Part of the Job: "When families don't get a child. And when people adopt and they're having huge, huge problems. It's hard watching families struggle."

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Trend in cloud computing technology in higher education
Cloud computing programs, such as Google Docs and Microsoft's Office Live, run over the Internet rather than on an individual's computer, and such technology will likely bring changes to how students study, how scholars do research, and how college IT departments operate. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Forum focuses on impact of hate

It's daunting enough being the new kid in school, but for Saeid Chavoshi, adjusting to life in unfamiliar surroundings extended beyond the confines of the classroom.

At 11, he emigrated with his family from Iran to Canada, facing the added challenge of moving to a country where he didn't speak the language.

And if that wasn't tough enough, the comments directed his way from some fellow students didn't make things easier.

"They used to just pick on me," recalled Chavoshi, who would later recount his experience as a newcomer in his high-school valedictory address.

"And things … when I look back, are not that hurtful. It's just that when you're young, they really hit you hard.

"They would tell me things like, 'Go back where you came from,' or 'The brown kid who doesn't speak English' … things like that that make you feel sort of isolated."

Now 19, Chavoshi is again speaking about the obstacles he has faced in hopes of empowering others encountering similar challenges and to help to illustrate the power words have to hurt as well as heal.

The University of Toronto student will be part of a panel of young people sharing their experiences Wednesday at a Young Leaders Forum organized by the Canadian Centre for Diversity. The forum will explores the personal cost and impact of hate.

Centre president and CEO Amanda Sherrington first proposed the idea of a leadership program bringing together high school students to look at themes around a world without stigma to Carla Wittes, vice-president of programs for the organization. Following the inaugural forum in 2002, they heard overwhelmingly from participants who said they never have a chance to sit and talk so openly or to ask meaningful questions about life experience, Wittes said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Reaction to Maclean's university rankings

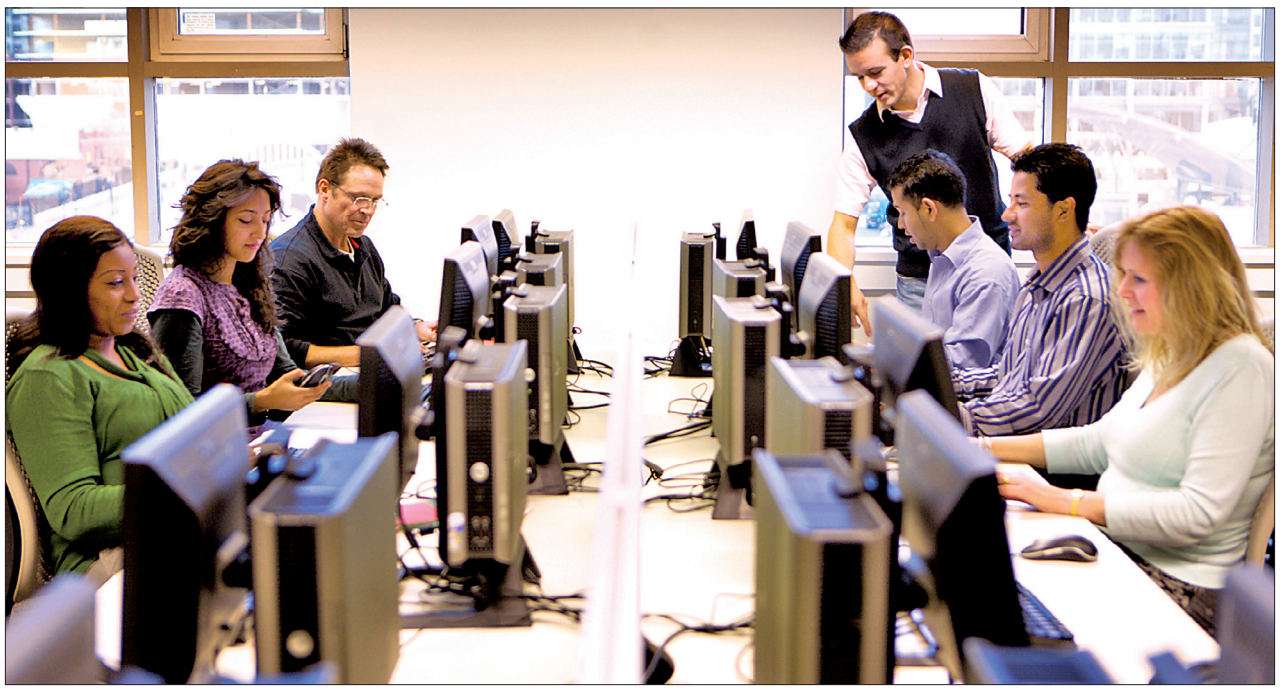
After finishing last in rankings of institutions of its kind in Maclean's latest University Rankings, Cape Breton University's president says the results may not change unless the ranking criteria is altered. Last year, the magazine dropped nine categories from its rankings, including areas in which CBU excelled. METRO NEWS SERVICES

College & University 2009

The allure of mature students

Province offers up money for laid-off workers to go back to school

The pool of potential older students among the GTA's five million people is big. Myriad new skills are needed in rapidly changing workplaces. The region's local colleges and universities have responded to this growing demand for the upgrading of skills by courting these students.



Going back to school as a mature student can let you hone your skills to become an indispensable part of the workforce.

York University takes its recruiters and admissions staff on the road throughout the year, reaching out to adult education centres and setting up information tables at nearby colleges.

"We have information evenings at York for mature students, which we publicize on our website," says Barbara Brown, senior director of admissions.

"We know this group often has specific questions, so we create a zone" at public events to address their needs.

Brown estimates 8,500 of York's 50,000 undergraduate students are 25 or older.

York has an entire department, the Atkinson Centre for Mature and Part-time Students, staffed with advisers to take care of their special needs.

Centennial College already has one of the oldest student populations in Ontario. Almost 40 per cent of its 12,000 full-timers are 21 to 25.

This compares to almost 50 per cent provincewide; 28 per cent are 25 and older at Centennial compared to 5 per cent throughout the province.

Part of the reason for the relative maturity of its students is the large number of immigrants Greater Toronto attracts, says Vicky Choy, Centennial's recruitment registrar.

Many already have university degrees and go to college to get Canadian experience in their fields.

STAYING AHEAD OF THE CURVE

Another reason is the practical, workready training college provides.

"I don't think it should be a surprise to anyone that as technology changes people will have to come back from time to time to update their skills," Choy says.

"It's really just about providing a supportive environment (for mature applicants) and demystifying the process." Choy says she expects applications from mature students to increase thanks to the province's new Second Career program.

Announced in June, the program sets aside $355 million to help 20,000 recently laid-off workers get long-term training.

Ministry of Colleges and Universities spokesperson Greg Flood says Employment Ontario offices have already received 1,000 inquiries and thousands of hits on the program's website at ontario.ca/secondcareer.

Depending on the course chosen and personal circumstances, an applicant may qualify for a retraining allowance of up to $28,000.

But when it comes to winning a spot in a school of higher education, age alone won't get you in as a "mature" student. Yes, you have to be at least 21 and out of high school two years or more. But if you've completed a full year of studies at a college or university, you will be judged on your marks, not your potential to succeed based on life experience. Even if you qualify as a mature student, you still have to meet course-specific requirements.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Second Career

- Second Career is an Ontario government program that can help laid-off workers get back on their feet by developing their skills. The program can provide as much as $28, 000 in financial aid for tuition fees and other expenses — such as books, living expenses and help caring for dependents — that retraining workers will incur. You start by talking to a counsellor at an Employment Ontario assessment centre. They will ask you about your previous work history, education, training, skills, interests and goals. If Second Career is the answer for you, the counsellor helps you prepare an application package and training plan. For more information on Second Career, visit edu.gov.on.ca/eng/tcu/secondcareer/index.html

Corporate residency for Dalhousie MBA program

JON TATTRIE
for Metro Canada

Business students wanting a crack at some of North America's top employers now have a chance to earn an eight-month paid internship via Dalhousie University's first Corporate Residency MBA.

"The Dalhousie Corporate Residency MBA will focus on recent undergraduates — the best and the brightest in the fields of engineering, science and arts — and give them the opportunity to fast-track their business careers," said David Wheeler, dean of the faculty management. "For companies that partner with the program, the Dalhousie MBA will open a new avenue for recruitment that will bring top quality candidates to their organizations."

The program allows students to earn management-level salaries to help defray tuition costs while working at leading banks, financial institutes, government agencies and major corporations. Dalhousie won't know what sort of remuneration that will be until a class has gone through the program, but it will likely be in the range of $4,000 a month.

Colin Craig, of the faculty of management, says there has been a lot of interest already. "I think there will be some stiff competition for the first 50 seats," he said.

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Andress tops Bond girl poll

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Entertainment

Gift to Africa

Anthony Edwards agreed to return for E.R.'s final episodes, on condition his paycheque be donated to the African charity Shoe4Africa, which promotes AIDS awareness. IMDB.COM

EDITOR: TINA COSTANZA, TINA.COSTANZA@METRONEWS.CA

●●●●● A CLASSIC; ●●●● EXCELLENT; ●●● GOOD; ●● FAIR; ● POOR

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Websites are not only one-way radio stations — they are community websites and have become intelligent about what kind of music you like and what new artists you should be listening to.

Many sites avoid the issue of rights by becoming friends of big labels in order to provide music for free. METRO WORLD NEWS

Four online services to tune into with your computer

	Spotify.com ●●●●●	Last.FM ●●●●	Imeem.com ●●●●	Pandora.com ●●
What it does	Streams music to the computer and cannot be saved or stored. It can only be listened to in real time.	Internet radio community website. Not allowed to upload copyrighted audio files, except of commercially available albums.	Social media network with free on-demand streaming of music and video content.	Internet radio service. **Only in U.S.**
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Cost	Free with ads (currently only available on invitation). Otherwise, $15 per month for unlimited listening.	Free, or subscribe for $3 US per month.	Free, registration required to play many full-length tracks. **Also video**	Free subscription is supported by ads and a non-fee subscription is provided without ads.
Number of songs	Seems to be unlimited.	More than 3.5 million individual audio tracks.	Unknown.	More than 600,000.
Comment	Simple iTunes-like interface with good streaming. Free version is not open for all.	Builds profile based on what you play. Grade, comment and share playlists.	Users can create, recommend and discover music, film/video and art.	Provide feedback on the selections that Pandora stores for future reference.

GUEST EDITOR JAMES BLUNT

New music just a mouse click away

The digital revolution has brought record stores into our homes, and it's a great thing. Sure, illegal file-sharing between friends and illegal downloading has decimated the music industry, and new bands are therefore finding it harder to get investment to get them into recording studios. But as time goes on, there are an increasing number of easy-to-use, value for money, online music retailers. iTunes was at the forefront of the industry, but healthy competition is on its way, and hopefully, the music industry will find its feet again.

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▶ Braun cord/ cordless shaver REG $69.95 NOW $39.95 3612

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▶ Delonghi pump expresso/cappucino maker REG $199.95 NOW $89.95 Made in Italy

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DO IT ONLINE. NOT IN LINE.

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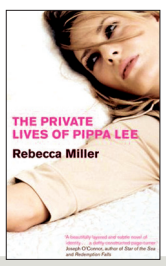
New designer
Actress Jessica Biel may create a range of handbags for her boyfriend Justin Timberlake's fashion line. **IMDB.COM**

Sex, lies and Testimony

Testimony
Author: Anita Shreve
Publisher: Little, Brown and Company
Price: $28.99 (Hardcover)

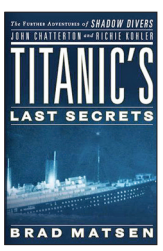
In Testimony, Oprah's Book Club alumnus Anita Shreve explores how the actions contained on one videotape can change the lives of every person invested in it. When Mike Bordwin, headmaster at New England's Avery Academy, receives a videotape depicting underage sex, he is challenged to properly handle the issue and discover its origin. Through his accounts and those of nearly 20 others involved in the case, a greater picture begins to unfold. Each chapter extends on one character's personal testimonial, unearthing more and more about the emotionally charged video and its consequences.



The Private Lives of Pippa Lee
Author: Rebecca Miller
Publisher: HarperCollins
Price: $16.50 (Paperback)

Filmmaker, actress and author Rebecca Miller writes about the inevitable downside to stability in her new novel, The Private Lives of Pippa Lee. At 50-years-old, the title character, whose youth can be considered little less than tempestuous, has just got used to her simple, suburban lifestyle. When her 80-year-old husband suggests moving to a nursing home to spend his final days, the thought of another drastic life change prompts Pippa to recall her rocky past. The film version will be due out next year.

BookPicks



Titanic's Last Secrets
Author: Brad Matsen
Publisher: Twelve
Price: $30.99 (Hardcover)

Brad Matsen retells the titanic journey taken by John Chatterton and Richie Kohler, who previously detailed the duo's underwater U-Boat discovery in Shadow Divers. Now, the pair is headed for the motherload — the Titanic. Chatterton and Kohler investigate the ship that sank in 1912 to discover why 'The Unsinkable' sank so fast. The book traces the Titanic back to its original construction and eventual destruction, detailing structural errors that contributed to the ship's demise. The team uses exploration with research to reveal the fated ship's 'last secrets'.

BRIAN COULTON/ FOR METRO CANADA

BEST AVAILABILITY TUES-THURS AT 8

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Photo: Chris Callis
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Missed your 2009 Milk Calendar in the Saturday Star?

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More Mohr

CBS has given a full-season order to Gary Unmarried, the comedy starring Jay Mohr as a recently divorced man. EW.COM

JAMIE, WHAT'S COOKING?
His visit to Virgin

PLANET MAURIE PHOTO

TV chef and awesome guy **Jamie Oliver** joined The Breakfast Show with **Mad Dog & Billie** on Virgin Radio to talk about his new book "Jamie at Home" and being on the Food Network.

Watch the video of him having too much fun and not wanting to leave at - virginradio999.com

Virgin RADIO 99.9 FM

Metro Global Photo Challenge 2008

"This photo was taken on a very cold and nasty February afternoon. It was misty enough to make the city appear really tranquil but also a bit desolate. It reminded me of a city whose golden days had come and gone... (with the bird) the only sign of life left around."

David Addington, Toronto

Jungle Bird

Metro's Global Photo Challenge has drawn 3,890 entries from Toronto, Ottawa, Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton and Halifax, and 55,389 international entries. Vote for your favourite shot at **metronews.ca/photochallenge** until Nov. 23. An international jury will judge the Top 5 photos, and the winner will receive a Nikon D700 DSLR and Nikon 24-70mm F2.8 zoom lens. The photo above is a detail of the entry. Visit the website to see the full image.

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Pappas to co-host Get Married
The Bachelorette DeAnna Pappas — who recently called off her engagement to show winner Jesse Csincsak — will be co-hosting Lifetime network's Get Married. The second season premieres Jan. 5. **PEOPLE.COM**

Why no Obama humour?

IntelleVision

rick.mcginnis@metronews.ca

NOT FUNNY: On the night after John F. Kennedy was assassinated, Lenny Bruce was apparently appearing in a New York nightclub, and decided to see if it was too soon to get comic traction out of the event. After delivering a gag whose details are unfortunately lost to history, he paused to take in the stony silence, then told the audience "Vaughn Meader is screwed!"

I hadn't thought about Vaughn Meader for years until I read a Washington Post column last week by Eugene Robinson, where the writer commented on Don Rickles' recent appearance on David Letterman. The show featured a similar stony silence in response to Rickles' shot at president-elect Barack Obama, a halting but not particularly vicious gag involving world crises and basketball that prompted an awkwardness you could practically see seeping out of the TV screen.

Robinson noted what's been obvious for months now — that there hasn't been a lot of humour directed at Obama, and none that has a fraction of the acid directed at everyone from John McCain and Sarah Palin to Obama's running mate, Joe Biden. Robinson takes the optimistic line that Americans are still making the "cultural attitude adjustments" necessary to absorbing the idea of an African-American president.

"Eventually, some comic will come up with a spot-on Obama impression, the way Vaughn Meader did with JFK," Robinson writes. "Eventually, audiences will revert to irreverence." Meader became a superstar with The First Family, a comedy album featuring his eerie JFK mimicry, but fell into obscurity overnight after his death, shunned as a reminder of the time when the nation could be irreverent with Kennedy.

Right now, Obama is revered but unknown, a symbol more than a man, and Robinson thinks it's a pity. He doesn't think Rickles was being racist — Obama's love of basketball is well-known, but right now audiences are quick to take preemptive offense.

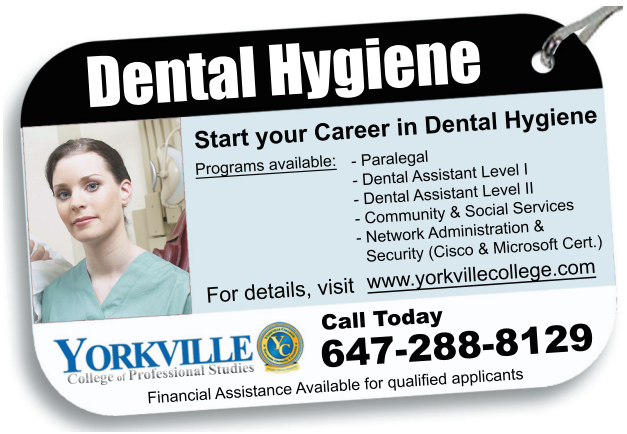
"To the extent that the Obama family's tastes or habits seem in any way distinctive," he writes, "they will have to be seen as the Obama family's specific tastes and habits — attributable not to a group but to a set of individuals. The idea that 'all black people' are like this or like that has always been absurd, and this absurdity becomes inescapable when a black person occupies the singular position of head of state." I'd like to hope he's right, because if he's not, it's going to be a dull and dismal four years.

Rick McGinnis writes about music, movies, books and television, but not opera.

NBC PHOTO

Despite Fred Armisen's (pictured) SNL portrayals of Barack Obama, not a lot of humour has been directed at the president-elect.

See complete online movie listings, trailers, reviews and purchase tickets at metronews.ca/movies



Box office

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theatres, according to studios:

1. **Quantum of Solace:** $70.4 million US
2. **Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa:** $36.1 million
3. **Role Models:** $11.7 million
4. **High School Musical 3: Senior Year:** $5.9 million
5. **Changeling:** $4.2 million
6. **Zack and Miri Make a Porno:** $3.2 million
7. **Soul Men:** $2.43 million
8. **The Secret Life of Bees:** $2.4 million
9. **Saw V:** $1.8 million
10. **The Haunting of Molly Hartley:** $1.6 million

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

GlobalStyle

Exclusively at *metronews.ca/style*

TO		Vu	SC	C	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
11/17/08	primetime	265	353	2	TVO	Time Team "Flag Fen"		The Agenda With Steve Paikin		Midsomer Murders		In Korea with Norm Christie		Agenda-Paikin
		211	331	3	GTV	ET Canada	Entertainment	Prison Break (N)		Heroes "It's Coming" (N)		My Own Worst Enemy		News (N)
		215	343	4	OMN1	Two-Half Men	The Simpsons	News (N)		Vivere Il	News (N)	The Simpsons	King of the Hill	Metropia
		210	302	6	CBC	Coronation St.	Jeopardy! (N)	Dragon's Den (N)		The Border "The Sweep"		CBC News: The National		The Hour
		214	344	7	CITY	Law & Order: SVU		Chuck (HDTV) (N)		Celebrity Fit Club		Curb-Enthsm	Less-Kind	News (N)
		212	313	8	CTV	etalk	Hollywood	Dancing With the Stars			Corner Gas (N)	CSI: Miami (HDTV) (N)		News (N)
		218	345	11	E!	The Insider (N)	E! News	Name Is Earl	How I Met	How I Met	Worst Week	(10:02) Boston Legal		News (N)
		137	763	13	TFO	Panorama		Le Monde des couleurs		*La Belle captive* ★★ (1983, Drame)			Folie-aventure	Croisée
		-	-	14	-	Cold Case "Revolution"		News (N)		News (N)		2Half Men	Friends	Hist Language
		213	326	15	SUN	Scrubs	George Lopez	Funniest Pets	Funniest Pets	One Tree Hill (HDTV) (N)		To Serve and Protect		Grill Rm.
		-	387	16	CBS	Inside Edition	Hollywood	Big Bang Th	How I Met	Two/Half Men	Worst Week	CSI: Miami (HDTV) (N)		News (N)
		-	385	17	NBC	The Insider (N)	Entertainment	Chuck (HDTV) (N)		Heroes "It's Coming" (N)		My Own Worst Enemy		News (N)
		-	386	18	ABC	Sports Special		Pre Game	NFL Football Cleveland Browns at Buffalo Bills. (Live)					
		219	346	20	ACH-B	Instant Star	TMZ (N)	Sarah Connor Chronicles		Two/Half Men	Samantha Who	(10:02) The Mentalist		News (N)
		-	-	28	FOX	Judge Judy (N)	Two/Half Men	Sarah Connor Chronicles		Prison Break (N)		Seinfeld	Two/Half Men	The Simpsons
		-	388	61	PBS	News-Lehrer	Time Goes By	Antiques Roadshow		American Experience (HDTV) (DVS)			N.Y. Learns	Business Rpt.
		297	652	330	WPX	Two/Half Men	Family Guy	Gossip Girl (HDTV) (N)		One Tree Hill (HDTV) (N)		CW11 News at Ten (N)		Two/Half Men
		296	654	331	SBK	Wheel-Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	Dr. Phil (HDTV)		WBZ News (N)	'70s Show	Frasier	Frasier	Punk'd
		298	653	332	TLA	Jamie Foxx	Wayans Bros.	My Wife-Kids	According-Jim	Family Guy	Family Guy	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Gossip Girl (N)
	news	502	390	26	NW	CBC News	Newman	The Hour		CBC News: The National		The Mama Mia Story (N)		National
		500	500	33	CNN	Lou Dobbs Tonight		Campbell Brown: No Bias		Larry King Live		Anderson Cooper 360 (HDTV)		
		509	504	79	CNB	CNBC Reports				Cash Flow		The Big Idea With Deutsch		Mad Money
	sports	405	417	22	net	Hockeycentral	NHL Hockey Boston Bruins at Toronto Maple Leafs. (Live)					Sportsnet Connected		Hockey Central
		400	400	30	TSN	That's Hockey!	Monday Night Countdown		NFL Football Cleveland Browns at Buffalo Bills. (HDTV) (Live)					
		411	457	58	OLN	Ed's Up	Videos	The Academy		Mantracker		Departures		Pilot Guides
		417	406	81	SC	Pinks	Pass Time	This Week in NASCAR (N)		My Classic Car	My Classic Car	Barrett-Jackson		Pinks (HDTV)
	family	551	542	25	YTV	Malcolm-Mid.	Home Improve.	Malcolm-Mid.	Fresh Prince	Futurama	Prank Patrol	Mystery Hnt.	Adrenaline Proj	Mystery Hnt.
		554	544	45	TEL	George-Jungle	Bugs Bunny & Tweety Show		Wayside	Johnny Test	Futurama	American Dad	Robot Chicken	Life's a Zoo
		556	540	51	FAM	Wizards-Place	That's-Raven	Zack & Cody	Natural-Sadie	Han. Montana	Life Derek	Ned's School	Cory in House	Zack & Cody
	cable variety	602	567	27	W	Will & Grace	Friends	How Clean	House	Love It or List It (N)		Real Est	Kim	Save Us-House
		570	580	29	MM	Punk'd	Punk'd	Pimp My Ride	Pimp My Ride	50 Cent: Money and Power		MuchNews	The NewMusic	MuchVibe
		615	520	31	A&E	CSI: Miami (HDTV)		Intervention "Allison"		Intervention "Phillip"		The First 48		The First 48
		700	800	35	TLN	Centrovetrine	Sky TG 24	Se Forte Maestro		Distretto Di Polizia		Raymond	Raymond	George Lopez
		571	581	36	MMM	mmmtop	Revival	Listed		Coolio's Rules		Parental Advis.	Revival	Party of Five
		575	583	38	CMT	All About ...	Tara Diaries	Home Improve.	Home Improve.	Reba	Reba	Hope & Faith	Hope & Faith	Gone, Reunion
		616	521	39	SHO	Love-Death	Love-Death	Painkiller Jane		Kenny-Spenny	Rent-A-Goalie	Name Is Earl	Name Is Earl	The Office
		620	523	40	BVO	Desperate Housewives		Grasslands-Heaven		When Moses Woke		Whoever You May Be		Law & Order
		601	562	41	SLC	End of Leash	ET Canada	Til Debt-Part	Newlywed	Beautiful	Party Mamas	Project Runway "Nature Calls"		Til Debt-Part
		522	506	43	HIS	NCIS "Blackwater"		Battle 360		Underworld Histories		NCIS "Blackwater"		Crime Stories
		625	548	44	COM	Air Farce	Just for Laughs		Corner Gas	The Simpsons	South Park	Doug Stanhope: No Refunds		Daily Show
		600	564	46	H&G	House Hunters	Property Virgin	My First Place	Home to Stay	Property Virgin	Marriage	Income Prop.	House Hunters	Holmes-Homes
		294	529	47	TBS	House-Payne	House-Payne	*A Night at the Roxbury* (1998, Comedy)			Steve Harvey	Family Guy	Family Guy	Seinfeld
		576	582	49	BET	106 & Park: BET's Top 10 Live		*Soul Plane* ★★ (2004, Comedy) Kevin Hart, Tom Arnold.				Keyshia Cole	Keyshia Cole	Brother-Brutha
		627	528	50	SPC	Lost "The Whole Truth"		Star Trek (Part 1 of 2)		Battlestar Galactica		Eureka "Best in Faux"		Stargate SG-1
		581	566	52	MTV	The Hills	After Show	MTV News	Cribs	Spoilers	The Hills	The Hills	After Show	MTV Live
		618	524	54	TROP	TV Made, Do It	Very Bad Men		What Happen?	Make or Break	TV Made, Do It	Planet Soap	Reality	Final 24
		603	561	56	FOOD	The Main	Chef at Home	Restaurant Makeover		Good Eats	Ace of Cakes	Kitchen Nightmares		Restaurant
		261	394	60	V	Murder, She Wrote		Prime Minister	May-December	McLeod's Daughters (N)		The Protestant Revolution		Mysterious Wy
		621	527	63	STR	The Ellen DeGeneres Show		TMZ (N)	etalk	Scream Queens		The Tonight Show-Jay Leno		TMZ
		553	546	65	TRE	Wonder Pets	Nght Grdn	Friend Rabbit	Franklin	Little Bear	Miss Spider	Comfy Couch	Rolie Polie Olie	Beren. Bears
		115	711	101	TVA	Les Auditions de Star Acadé		Annie et ses hommes (N) (SC)		Dr. House "Démission" (SC)		TVA 22 heures	(10:45) Denis Lévesque	
		126	730	102	RDI	24 Heures en 60 minutes		Grands reportages (SC)		Le Téléjournal (SC)		RDI en direct	Le National	Le Téléjournal
		526	507	249	VIVA	Judging Amy		Commander In Chief		The West Wing		Truth, Duty, Valour		Mediums
		300	601	301	M1	Sanctuary "The Five"		Stargate Atlantis		Californication	Little Britain	Brotherhood (N)		Sanctuary
		305	612	306	PIX	(7:15) *A Family of Cops* (1995, Mystery)				*The Last Man on Earth* ★★ (1964)			*Them!* ★★★ (1954)	

critics' corner

Dance, Dance, Whoever You May Be
Irish dancing, which attracted worldwide attention with the popularity of "Riverdance" and "Lord of the Dance," is spotlighted in this special, which takes its title from a line in the song "Lord of the Dance." It follows five young dancers preparing to show their steps in a national competition, while also touching on the history and tradition. 10 PM on BVO

Chuck
Chuck and Jill (Zachary Levi, Jordana Brewster) are forced to cancel their plans for a weekend getaway when Casey and Sarah (Adam Baldwin, Yvonne Strahovski) tell Chuck he's needed for a mission to find corrupt agents within the CIA. 8 PM on NBC CITY

CSI: Miami
Can you believe this show is celebrating 150 episodes this week? It seems like just yesterday that sunscreen was the least of people's problems. But this week, the team races the clock to find a baby kidnapped by a killer in hopes of keeping the child from becoming the next victim. 10 PM on CTV CBS

Bear Grylls expecting a new cub

Man vs. Wild star Bear Grylls and his wife, Shara, are expecting their third son. The baby is due in January and the couple is considering the name Huckleberry for their new addition. **PEOPLE.COM**

Celebrity Buzz

Activists flour Lohan

CONTROVERSY Lindsay Lohan's trip to France turned sour early on Saturday morning when she was showered with flour at a Paris club, imdb.com reports.

An anti-fur activist covered the actress with flour as she was partying with friends on the city's famous Champs-Elysees.

"Lindsay Lohan — fur hag!" he yelled, as the actress stood fuming after the attack.

"Lindsay was mortified and then furious," a bystander says. "She's in Paris supporting her girlfriend, DJ Samantha Ronson, and I think she was planning a flour-free weekend."

It's believed the flour thrower was connected to animal rights group People For The Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), which has attacked Lohan in recent days for wearing fur coats. "Lohan has enraged animal lovers by appearing in at least two different fur coats in recent days, despite PETA's repeated pleas that she consider how animals suffer for every fur garment and stop wearing their skins. She was named on PETA's annual Worst Dressed List earlier this year," a statement from PETA reads.

Her love of fur hit the headlines in May, when she was accused of stealing an $11,000 US fur coat from a New York club.

PETA Europe's Robbie LeBlanc has applauded the flour attack on Lohan, stating, "There is nothing remotely fashionable about the torture and death of animals killed for fur.

"Lindsay Lohan might be able to ignore images of bloody animals skinned alive for their pelts, but we hope a dash of flour will help her rise to the occasion and forsake fur once and for all."

A spokesperson for Lohan was unavailable for comment.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

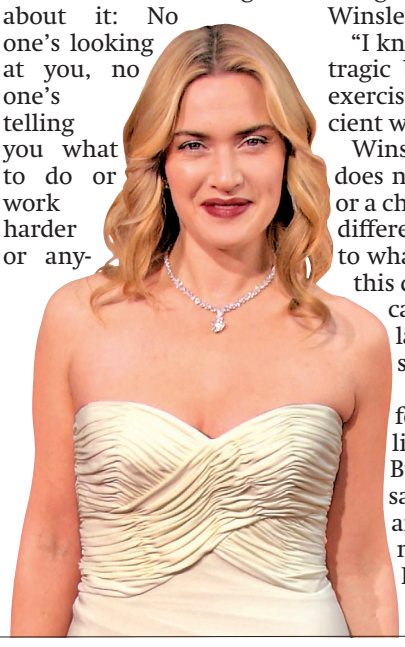
No body doubles for Winslet

HEALTH Kate Winslet doesn't use a body double in her movies and disputes weight-loss claims. What's her secret?

"My mantra is 'keep it simple,'" the actress tells the U.K.'s Daily Mail in a new interview, revealing that she cooks at home and she eats anything except pasta — "it gives me a stomach ache."

She also exercises with Pilates, People.com reports.

"I have a mat and little hand weights and I do a stomach thing and a bum thing. It's very simple — you barely break into a sweat," she says of practising to a DVD "on the living room carpet."



"Here's what's so great about it: No one's looking at you, no one's telling you what to do or work harder or anything like that," says Winslet.

"I know it seems slightly tragic but it's my way of exercising in a time-efficient way."

Winslet, who says she does not employ a trainer or a chef, adds: "My body's different. It has settled into what it is now. None of this different diets lark. I can't remember the last time I tried some new fad.

"Nobody is perfect. I just don't believe in perfection. But I do believe in saying, 'This is who I am and look at me not being perfect.' I'm proud of that."

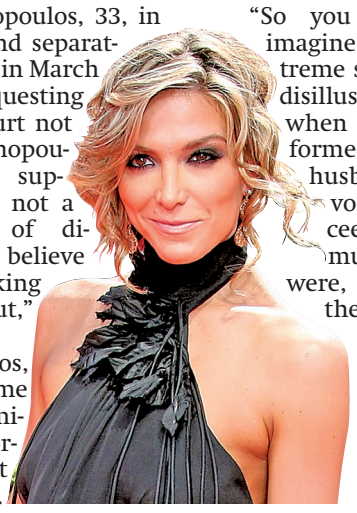
METRO NEWS SERVICES

Matenopoulos' husband files for divorce

SPLIT TV personality Debbie Matenopoulos says she is hurt — and surprised — by her husband's divorce filing, which she learned about from Internet reports, People.com reports.

"I am extremely saddened by the dissolution of my seven-year relationship with my husband," the host of E!'s Daily 10 told People.

Jay Faires, a music executive, filed for divorce, citing irreconcilable differences, according to Los Angeles court papers filed Wednesday. Faires, who wed Matenopoulos, 33, in July 2003 and separated from her in March 2008, is requesting that the court not award Matenopoulos spousal support. "I am not a proponent of divorce and I believe in working things out," says Matenopoulos, a two-time Emmy nominee and former co-host of The View.



"So you can only imagine my extreme sadness and disillusionment when I was informed of my husband's divorce proceedings, much like you were, by reading them online."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Beyoncé was in 'no rush'

MARRIAGE Beyoncé, who has always been tight-lipped about her marriage to Jay-Z, is finally giving some insight into her thoughts about tying the knot, People.com reports.

"I was 18 when we first met, 19 when we first started dating. There was no rush," the singer tells Seventeen in its December/January issue, due out Tuesday. "I really don't believe that you will love the same thing when you're 20 as you do at 30."

The singer says she wanted to have a strong sense of self before making a lifelong commitment to anyone.

"Before the age of 25, I would never get married," says Beyoncé, 27. "I feel like you have to get to know yourself, know what you want, spend some time by yourself, and be proud of who you are before you can share that with someone else."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

GETTY IMAGES PHOTOS

Jonas denies he cheated on Swift

RELATIONSHIPS Jonas Brothers star Joe Jonas has denied cheating on ex-girlfriend Taylor Swift, attributing the breakup to "a change of heart," imdb.com reports.

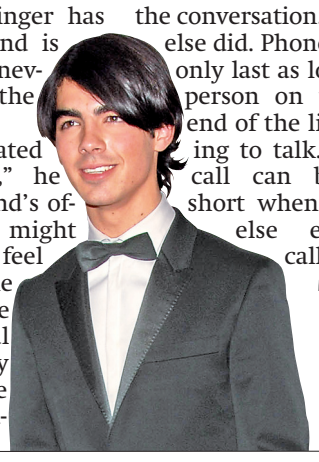
Jonas came under fire recently after Swift revealed he had ended their relationship in a 27-second phone call and accused him of dumping her for 10,000 BC actress Camille Belle. But the singer has now hit back, and is adamant he was never unfaithful to the country singer.

"I never cheated on a girlfriend," he writes on the band's official blog. "It might make someone feel better to assume or imply I have been unfaithful but it is simply not true. Maybe there were reasons for a breakup. Maybe the heart moved on. Perhaps feelings changed."

Jonas insists the reason their breakup conversation took place in less than 30 seconds is because Swift slammed the phone down on him.

"I called to discuss feelings with the other person," he adds. "Those feelings were obviously not well received. I did not end the conversation. Someone else did. Phone calls can only last as long as the person on the other end of the line is willing to talk. A phone call can be pretty short when someone else ends the call."

METRO NEWS SERVICES



Vardalos, husband adopt girl

FAMILY Nia Vardalos, the breakout star of the 2002 hit My Big Fat Greek Wedding, has adopted a child, People.com reports.

The little girl, whose name has not been released, is the first for the 46-year-old actress and her husband, Ian Gomez, E! Online reports. The couple adopted the toddler, who is less than five years old, several months ago.

"They are going public now to bring attention to National Adoption Month and the 500,000 children in foster care," according to a statement from Vardalos' rep. "Of these children, 129,000 are 'legally free' for adoption and waiting for a family."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Jewel eager to start family

PEOPLE Singer Jewel is eager to start a family now that she's a married woman, femalefirst.co.uk reports. The newlywed has revealed she plans to conclude her tour commitments and then start preparing for parenthood with her husband Ty Murray.

"We want to start a family. I hope to tour next year and start a family," Jewel says. The couple married in August.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Sigler glad she didn't have kids

PEOPLE Former Sopranos star Jamie-Lynn Sigler is "glad" she didn't have children with her ex-husband, as she was too young and "misguided" to start a family, imdb.com reports.

The 27-year-old actress married her agent, A.J. Discala, in 2003 but they split just two years later. And Sigler is happy she didn't follow her initial instinct to have a baby with her former partner.

"(I was) often misguided and misled," she tells New York Post's Page Six magazine. "I didn't know who I was. I was living in an idealistic dream world — like, 'I have a successful show and this handsome man, and I'm 22 and I'm getting married and may have a baby next year!'"

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Theron named a Messenger of Peace

APPOINTMENT Charlize Theron has been named a United Nations Messenger Of Peace for her work towards ending violence against women, imdb.com reports. The actress was awarded the title on Friday, joining the ranks of fellow actors George Clooney, Michael Douglas and musician Yo-Yo Ma. Celebrities chosen as messengers of peace are asked to promote U.N. activities and ideals through public appearances and media contacts.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

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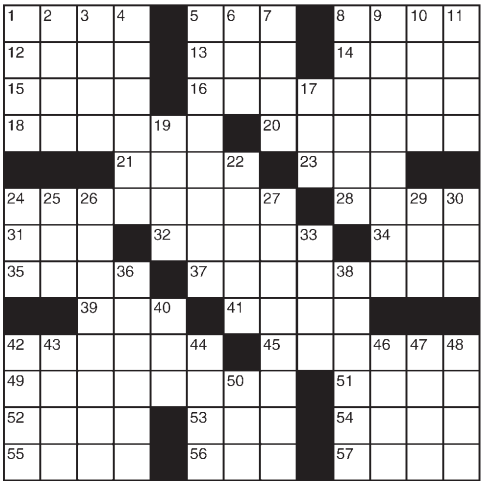

Crossword across

1 Donate
5 Floor cleaner
8 Sail support
12 Mideast gulf
13 First lady?
14 Reverberate
15 Approach
16 Quebecois, e.g.
18 Half a pair of winter boots
20 Teeny bit
21 October birthstone
23 Deposit
24 Southwestern saloons
28 Vegan's no-no
31 Lingerie item
32 Shy
34 Hot tub
35 Collections
37 Flour receptacle
39 Hostel
41 Con game
42 Sent packing
45 Grassy plains
49 Australia's capital
51 Audition hope
52 Bedouin
53 Where (Lat.)
54 Story
55 Depend (on)
56 Soviet spacecraft
57 Counterfeit

Crossword down

1 Group of hoodlums
2 Notion
3 Osso buco ingredient
4 Establish
5 Garage worker
6 Eggs
7 Calligrapher's supply
8 Seance VIP
9 Severe trial
10 Carpet style
11 Coloration quality
17 Rock concert need
19 Skewer
22 Actor Lorenzo
24 Couric's network
25 Exist
26 Countrywide
27 "The Jungle" author
29 Gorilla
30 Paving material
33 Rotary phone feature
36 Persnickety
38 Intelligence
40 Born
42 Cicatrix
43 Tortoise's opponent
44 Conga, e.g.
46 Ark builder
47 Earthenware pot
48 Appear
50 Bat stat

Sudoku

HOW TO PLAY: Digits 1 through 9 will appear once in each zone – one zone is an outlined 3x3 grid within the larger puzzle grid. There are nine zones in the puzzle. Do not enter a digit into a box if it already appears elsewhere in the same zone, row across or column down the entire puzzle.

3		4				2		5
	1		4		5		7	
7			9		2			1
		9	5		1	7		
		8	2		6	1		
9			7		8			6
	5		3		9		8	
2		7				3		9

PREVIOUS DAY'S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS:

M	O	P		A	M	I	D		C	L	E	F
A	G	O		B	O	O	R		L	E	E	R
T	R	U	E	B	L	U	E		O	I	L	Y
T	E	T	R	A	D		S	O	W			
			I	C	Y		S	U	N	T	A	N
S	P	A	C	Y		J	E	T		E	T	A
U	L	N	A		B	U	D		G	R	O	G
B	E	E		P	E	G		D	U	M	P	S
S	A	W	R	E	D		M	I	L			
			U	Z	I		A	R	A	B	L	E
F	E	R	N		Z	A	N	E	G	R	E	Y
O	V	E	N		E	P	I	C		A	G	E
B	E	V	Y		N	E	A	T		G	O	D

3	4	2	9	7	6	8	5	1
7	8	9	5	1	3	6	2	4
1	6	5	8	2	4	3	9	7
4	1	8	2	3	5	9	7	6
2	9	6	1	8	7	4	3	5
5	7	3	4	6	9	1	8	2
6	5	7	3	9	1	2	4	8
8	3	4	6	5	2	7	1	9
9	2	1	7	4	8	5	6	3

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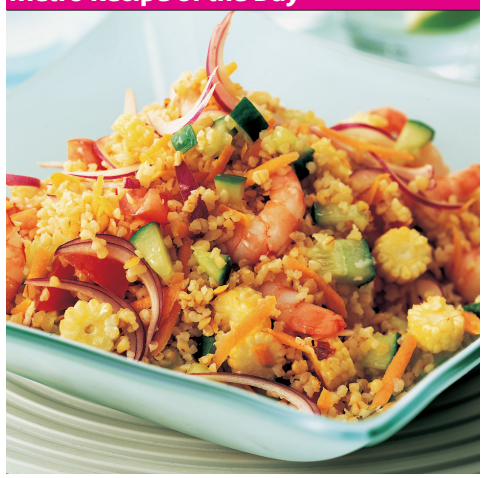
SUDOKU SOLVE TIME:

Under 13 min .....Genius
13-17 min.....Scholar
17-21 min .....Smart
21-25 min.....Not bad
25+ min.....Keep practising

Metro Recipe of the Day



Bulgur Wheat and Shrimp Salad

INGREDIENTS:

1 1/3 cup (400 mL) bulgur wheat
1 small red onion, very thinly sliced
1 carrot, coarsely grated
1 tomato, diced
6 baby corn cobs, sliced into rounds
1/2 cucumber, diced
7 oz (200 g) shelled cooked shrimp

LIME AND CHILI DRESSING:

4 tbsp (60 mL) extra-virgin olive oil
2 tbsp (25 mL) lime juice
1 garlic clove, crushed
1/4 tsp (1 mL) dried chili flakes
Salt and fresh-ground black pepper

METHOD:

1. Put bulgur wheat in a saucepan over medium heat and pour over 2 2/3 cups (650 mL) water. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer until bulgur wheat is tender and water is absorbed, about 10 minutes. Tip bulgur wheat onto a flat dish, spread out and leave to cool slightly.

2. Combine onion, carrot, tomato, corn, cucumber and shrimp in a large salad bowl. Add cooked bulgur wheat and stir together.

3. For dressing, put oil, lime juice, garlic, chili flakes, and salt and pepper to taste in a small bowl. Whisk with a fork until combined. Stir dressing into salad, tossing to coat all ingredients evenly. If not serving immediately, cover and keep in the refrigerator.

SERVES 4

rd.ca
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Reader's Digest
Diva's Dozen

Horoscopes

AVATAR VENUS

ARIES
MARCH 21-APRIL 20
Closure is found in a restraining relationship. Whimsy is needed to cheer a depressed friend. Ethical actions will bring joy to your home.

TAURUS
APRIL 21-MAY 21
A debate leads to moody tantrums. Prepare for an increased need for privacy. Someone wants to live with you.

GEMINI
MAY 22-JUNE 21
Apprehension is diminished by excellent news. A sudden reversal causes resentment. An ambitious person needs time alone to plan.

CANCER
JUNE 22-JULY 22
A habit causes distress for a close friend. Worrying about things will waste precious time. Strange conversations will raise eyebrows.

LEO
JULY 23-AUG 23
You must carve out your own path. There's uncertainty about how others feel. An unusual person is quite attracted to you.

VIRGO
AUG 24-SEPT 22
People comment on your blissful preoccupation. Unavoidable delays hamper movements. Be aware of your effect on other people.

LIBRA
SEPT 23-OCT 23
Cunning friends will use rational analysis. A demure smile gets a response. Conceal your impatience when dealing with an important person.

SCORPIO
OCT 24-NOV 22
A romance is impossible today. An authority figure's gestures make a profound impression. Avoid using trickery to get what you want.

SAGITTARIUS
NOV 23-DEC 21
Versatility helps to turn a new page in your life. Commotion arises after an angry remark is made. Whispered words tell a tale of uncertainty.

CAPRICORN
DEC 22-JAN 20
Someone's misconception leads to alienation. An opinionated person strains your patience. If something's not working, don't try to fix it.

AQUARIUS
JAN 21-FEB 18
Expect help in a troublesome situation. There's news of a wedding, a birth and an illness. Refuse to bow down to authority.

PISCES
FEB 19-MARCH 20
Children's laughter brings you good luck. Clear away the rubble of the past and get on with your life. Flattery will get you nowhere.

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